

Hussein frees prisoners

MONDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2002



RELATIVES DESCEND ON PRISON: An Iraqi crowd breaks into Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad to hasten the inmates' release. AP photo by Jerome Delay

In Basra, where thousands of Shiites have been detained over the years for opposing the Iraqi leader, the news spread quickly on Jumhooriya Street, where at least a half-dozen freed prisoners returned to their families.

On Sunday night, horns honked and people blew kisses to one another as former inmates came home.

"We will soon be together," Jaseb Mawla Khidhir, 43, told his son by telephone from Baghdad, where he was released after serving four years of a life sentence for drug dealing, his family said.

Relatives waited past midnight for Khidhir's appearance and planned a huge feast.

"We owe this act of kindness

'This is typical of [Saddam Hussein's] use of human beings for these political purposes of his.'

—Secretary of State Colin Powell

to our president," said Khidhir's uncle, Hassam Kidhir Mehdi. "Only he can make the Iraqi people free."

In the nearby jail, convicted embezzler Hussein, who had five years remaining on his sentence, was eating in his cell Sunday morning when the radio crackled about impending "good news for the Iraqi peo-

ple.

Hours later, the governor of the province arrived and called his name and those of scores of others who had been languishing behind bars.

Within minutes, Hussein strode into the arms of his crying family outside the jail.

"We thought this might happen because our president has talked about doing nice things for the people," he said.

The freed man promised to repay his leader. He plans to join the Iraqi army.

As Hussein hugged his brother, who said he lost a leg in an American bombing raid while fighting in the 1991 Persian Gulf war, he vowed, "I'll be a sacrifice for my country."



NETWORK

NEWSLETTER

Issue #1 December, 2002

INTRODUCTION

Greetings! I have been entrusted to edit the first issue of the Anarchist Black Cross Network (ABC-Net) Newsletter, which as is my wont, have churned out as a zine. For, I believe d.i.y. zines are what the samizdat press was in Soviet Russia, here in Amerika, to the nth degree. Prisoners zines are especially important as the exploding 2,000,000 plus population of our Brothers & Sisters, is bursting with insight, talent, courage, awareness and the necessary analysis we need to raise the level of consciousness needed to fight this hideous system, from within and help coordinate resistance from outside the vast gulag system. We need eachother and we need to *work* with eachother!

Back in July of 2002, several dedicated prison abolitionist activists in Texas, such as Ernesto Aguilar, the recently released anti-racist, political prisoner, Christopher Plummer, Rebecca, Eric, Samantha, Twitch, Sara and many, many others, dedicated several weeks to pull together this groundbreaking conference, which culminated in the creation of a new network of independent U.S. ABC groups and solidarity-minded sister groups. This is our story, our report.

It was my humbling task to attempt to come up with a publication that would begin to give this far-reaching endeavor a written voice. Now, I have been involved in dozens of prisoner zine publications and have edited newsletters and zines that served to speak for various anti-racist/anarchist/revolutionary prison abolitionist groups and chronicle the cases of various important prisoners. This has helped to bring the tremendous, groundbreaking analysis, focus, artistry and power of the most conscious and brave prisoners, here in the U.S.

I'm sure that important issues have not been emphasized enough, contributions and contact information from those who feel akin to this project have been slighted or omitted. Many, many prisoner submissions have not been included, not because they didn't deserve to be, but because this publication is a finite, 60-paged publication. The prison reality is vast and horrible and requires constant attention, struggle and dedication. It is the most oppressive, racist, sexist, violent and evil system in all of Amerikan capitalism. It's the racist class war brought home with a 24-hour a day vengeance. It needs to be torn asunder completely and all our loved ones brought home, like was shown is so eminently possible for the joyous Iraqi people!

Anthony Rayson, Chicago ABC

Short List of Prisoner Support Groups (New ABC Chapters are forming!)

Mexico

ABC/Cruz Negra Anarquista
Mexico (don't put ABC on envelope)
c/o Miguel Angel Cortes O.
Apdo 17808
Mexico D.F. 11 411

United States

Austin ABC *new!*
P.O. Box 684261
Austin, TX 78768-4261
austinabc_@hotmail.com

Dallas/Ft. Worth ABC
P.O. Box 202846
Arlington, TX 76006
website: www.geocities.com/ronin0582/index.html
DFW_ABC@anarcho.zzn.com

New York City ABC
P.O. Box 2044J
Tompkins Square Station
New York, NY 10009-9991
nycblackcross@hotmail.com

Philadelphia ABC
4722 Baltimore Ave.
Philadelphia, PA 19143
phillyabc@yahoo.com

Houston ABC
P.O. Box 667614
Houston, TX 77266-7614
website: www.houstonabc.org
houstonabc2@hotmail.com

Claustrophobia ABC
P.O. Box 1721
Baltimore, MD 21203
claustro@charm.net

South Chicago ABC Zine Distro.
P.O. Box 721
Homewood, IL 60430

Other Prisoner Support and Anti-Prison Groups

Anarchist Prisoners
Legal Aid Network
818 SW 3rd Ave
PMB 354;
Portland, OR 97204, USA
aplan@tao.ca

The Jericho Movement
P.O. Box 650
New York, NY 10009, USA
website:
www.thejerichomovement.com/

The MOVE Organization
P.O. Box 19709
Philadelphia, PA 19143, USA
(610) 499-0979
onamovellja@aol.com
website: http://www.moveorg.net/

Chicano Mexican Prison Project
P.O. Box 620095
San Diego, CA 92162, USA
udb2000@hotmail.com
website:
http://bum.ucsd.edu/~udb/cmpp/

Alvaro Luna Hernandez Defense
Committee
P.O. Box 667233
Houston, TX 77266-7233
website: www.freealvaro.org

Leonard Peltier Defense Committee
P.O. Box 583
Lawrence, KS 66044
(913) 842-5774
website: www.freepeltier.org

Onward Anarchist Newspaper
P.O. Box 2671
Gainesville FL 32602
info@onwardnewspaper.org
website:
www.onwardnewspaper.org
free prisoner subs

North American Earth Liberation
Prisoners Support Network
P.O. Box 11331
Eugene, OR 97440, USA
naelpsn@tao.ca
www.spiritoffreedom.org.uk

Animal Liberation Front
Support Group
Box 69597
5845 Yonge St.
Willowdale, Ontario, M2M 4K3,
Canada

Vegan Prisoners Support Group
P.O. Box 194
Enfield, Middx
EN1 3HD, England

ABC Spain
Paseo de Alberto Palacios
n.º 2
28021 Madrid

ABC Dijon Cedex
c/o Maloka
P.O. Box 536
21014
Dijon Cedex, France

South America

ABC Buenos Aires
c/o Pichon
CC 3411-C1000 WBI
Buenos Aires, Argentina

ABC Brazil
Caixa Postal 308
Santos, Brazil

ABC Brazil
Caixa Postale 14576-22412-970
Rio De Janeiro, Brazil

ABC / São Paulo
Caixa Postal 294
São Paulo - SP
CEP-01059-970
Brazil
cna_sp@hotmail.com

Australia

ABC Melbourne
P.O. 300
East Brunswick, Victoria 3057
Australia
abcmelb@yahoo.com.au

ABC Brisbane
P.O. Box 558
St. Brisbane
4101 Queensland, Australia

ABC Sydney
P.O. Box 691
Newtown Sydney
NSW, 2042
Australia

ABC Athens
c/o Basil
8 Aristidou St.
10558
Athens, Greece

ABC Huddersfield
P.O. Box 391
Huddersfield, HD 13XX
UK

12th Street Books
Inside Books Project
827 W. 12th Street
Austin, Texas 78701

prisoners of the class war.

For more information on the IRSM, our prisoners, and Teach na Failte, check out the following websites:

<http://www.irsm.org/irsm.html> -- The Irish Republican Socialist Movement
<http://www.irsm.org/irspows/> - Irish Republican Socialist Prisoners of War
http://www.irsm.org/irsp/free_dessie/ - Free Dessie Campaign
<http://www.irsm.org/irsp/tmf/> - Teach na Failte

Irish Republican Socialist Committees
2057 15th Street, Suite B
San Francisco, CA 94114

Irish Republican Socialist Party
POW Department
392 Falls Road,
Belfast, BT12, Ireland
--
Eric Hayes Patkowski

"Solidarity Is A Weapon!"

BRIEF LIST OF A FEW PRISONERS

Anarchist Prisoners:

Frank J. Atwood #62887, Arizona State Prison - Eyman, Box 3400 - SMU 2, Florence, AZ 85232. Radical involved in anti-establishment actions since the '60's. He was framed for murder in 1984 and sent to death row.
Jerome White-Bey #37479, Jefferson City Correctional Center, PO Box 900 (5C-146), Jefferson City, MO 65102. Social prisoner turned anarchist activist. Founder of the "Missouri Prison Labor Union."
Ojure Lutalo #59860, POB 861, Trenton, NJ 08625. Black liberation activist and anarchist serving a lengthy sentence for clandestine actions.
Robert Middaugh T41137 Bldg 410 23up, PO Box 8, Avenal, CA 93204. Serving three years for an assault on a pig during the 2001 Long Beach May Day action.
Mike Rusnak DOC K88887, Dixon CC, 2600 3rd St, PO Box 1200, Dixon, IL 61021. Serving time for stealing a police car, and other anti-government acts.
Robert Thaxton (Rob Los Ricos) #12112716, OSP, 2605 State Street, Salem, OR 97310. Long-time anarchist activist convicted of Assault and Riot for throwing a rock at a cop at the 1999 Eugene J18 Reclaim The Streets. He received a seven year sentence. He's currently assigned "Anarchist Security Group Status." Do not send anything containing any circle-A's.
Harold Thompson #93992, Northwest Correctional Complex, Route 1, Box 660, Tiptonville, TN 38079. Sentenced to life plus 50 years for a 1979 robbery of a jeweler, killing a police informer who had murdered his partner in a shooting incident in Ohio. He was later given an extra 32 years for a failed escape attempt.
Jeffrey Luers (Free) #13797671, OSP, 2605 State Street, Salem, OR 97310. Long-time environmentalist serving 22 years for politically-motivated arson attacks. He needs your support!

Thomas Tripp #12032560, 777 Stanton Blvd., Ontario, OR 97914. Social prisoner turned anarchist activist. He's facing up to three years in prison for his participation in a prison rights insurgency aimed at winning religious rights for Native prisoners, better educational programs for everyone, and other concessions.
Eric Wildcat #196612, 75 years for helping ship arms to Central American indigenous resisters.
Eddie Hatcher Marion Correctional Institution, PO Box 2405, Marion, NC 28752. Long-time Amerindian activist being framed for crimes he did not commit.
Leonard Peltier #89637-132, PO Box 1000, Leavenworth, KS 66048. American Indian Movement (AIM) activist, serving two life sentences; having been framed for the murder of two FBI agents.
Andy J. Riendeau (John Two Names) #193786, Elmore Correctional Facility, PO Box 2, Elmore AL 36025. Native activist being framed for setting schools on fire.
DOE M A-2-46
Anti Imperialist & Anti-Capitalist Prisoners:
Kathy Buddin #894171, PO Box 1000, Bedford Hills, NY 10507. Former Weather. Underground activist serving time for being a passenger in a get-away van during the 1981 Brink's expropriation attempt in New York. Despite her work with incarcerated mothers and AIDS victims, she is still being denied early release by the authorities.
Marilyn Buck #00482-285, Unit B, 5701 8th Street, Camp Parks, Dublin, CA 94568. Serving 50 years to life for actions taken after she escaped prison herself including an armed robbery of a Brink's armored truck and the liberation of Assata Shakur from prison. She is the only white member of the BLA.
Richard MaFundi Lake #079972, 100 Warrior Lane, #6-39, Bessemer, AL 35023. Black community activist being framed for a crime he did not commit.

Indigenous Prisoners:

William Firewalker Burchett #03655032, West 5852, Federal Prison, PO Box 7000, Fort Dix, NJ 08640. Native American religious rights activist being held in prison under questionable circumstances.
Eric Wildcat #196612, 75 years for helping ship arms to Central American indigenous resisters.
Eddie Hatcher Marion Correctional Institution, PO Box 2405, Marion, NC 28752. Long-time Amerindian activist being framed for crimes he did not commit.
Leonard Peltier #89637-132, PO Box 1000, Leavenworth, KS 66048. American Indian Movement (AIM) activist, serving two life sentences; having been framed for the murder of two FBI agents.
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2,000,000 + more!

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P.O. Box 721 Homewood, IL 60430 \$2.00 / free to prisoners

* Off the Hook #4, organ of the MPLU (Missouri Prison Labor Union) is now available. Many ABC's offer a wide variety of powerful prisoner zines. Do contact us!

New Draft Proposal for an Anarchist Black Cross Network

Introduction

Former Black Panther, political prisoner and a longtime anarchist revolutionary named Lorenzo Kombo Ervin wrote "A Draft Proposal for an Anarchist Black Cross Network" in 1979. The ABC movement was one of those organizations instrumental in helping see Kombo free, and Kombo spoke passionately for the development of a united movement around issues of incarceration and prisoner support. In the 1990s, these ideas were a catalyst in helping many ABC groups find focus. His ideas, while written years ago, embody principles that define our movement:

The stated purpose of the Anarchist Black Cross Network is to actively assist prisoners in their fight to obtain their civil and human rights, and to aid them in their struggle against the State/Class penal and judicial system. The prison system is the armed fist of the State, and is a system for State slavery. It is not really for "criminals" or other "social deviants," and it does not exist for the "protection of society."

It is for State social control and political repression. Thus it must be opposed at every turn and ultimately destroyed altogether. The abolition of prisons, the system of Laws, and the Capitalist State is the ultimate objective of every true Anarchist, yet there seems to be no clear agreement by the Anarchist movement to put active effort to that anti-authoritarian desire. We must organize our resources to support all political/class war prisoners if we truly wish to be their allies, and we must give something more than lip service.

Organizing against the enemy legal and penal system is both offensive and defensive. It is carried on with individuals, groups and among the masses in the community. We must inform the people on a large scale of the atrocities and inhumanity of the prisons, the righteousness of our struggle, and the necessity of their full participation and support. We must organize our communities to attack the prison system as a moral and social abomination, and we must fight to free all political/class war prisoners.

Since Lorenzo Kombo Ervin wrote those words, he has stated in recent lectures support for uniting with all prisoners, understanding the profound gulfs of race and class as they relate to incarceration, and of anarchists taking a stronger role in putting prison abolition, incarceration and criminalization on the global agenda of resistance.

The network proposal is the result of several dialogues over the last six months. Among the questions that arose was perhaps the most critical one, "in considering criminal injustice, rates of incarceration, racial disparities, the spirit and nature in which laws are applied and, of course, our collective analysis as people concerned about increasing repression, class warfare of haves against have nots, and for a freer, more just society... what is political? And aren't we waging a common struggle, despite the 'single issue' work?"

What is political about the injustice system, how laws are applied, who goes to jail and how bias factors into that?

What is political about the factors that play into "crime" and how sanction is applied?

And are we, as revolutionaries, little more than collaborators in genocide if we do not stand up?

This understanding is not so much a critique of terms such as "political prisoner," but of analyzing the politics of prisons, social control, law, sexism, racism and power. For years, the ABC and anarchist movements have grasped how each of these issues profoundly affects the lives of people, and have acted in the interests of freedom by building resistance. This must continue.

From country to country and state to state, figures are staggering, but the facts remain the same: Third World/indigenous/people of color and the working class and poor are forced into existences in which communities are gentrified; in which they are targeted over race and class or worse if they are "illegal"

Since the ABCN Conference, there has been some movement in the case involving Dessie O'Hare, long-time republican socialist activist and currently the longest-serving republican prisoner of war in Ireland. 57

In early October, the Release Of Prisoners Commission told the Irish Department of Justice that Dessie should be eligible for parole, so Dessie's supporters are optimistic that he will shortly be released on the Commission's recommended phased basis, which would hopefully dovetail into full and complete release. As of press time, this has not happened.

Dessie O'Hare has served a total of 23 years in prison since 1979, save a period of freedom in 1987, and he is currently in his 15th year of a 40-year sentence.

In 1998, the Irish and British governments began releasing political prisoners in accordance with the Good Friday Agreement, the culmination of the so-called Irish peace process that was supposed to end conflict in Ireland. Only those prisoners who belonged to groups maintaining a recognised cease-fire were granted early release -- all others forced to serve out their terms with remission.

The Irish National Liberation Army, to which Dessie O'Hare belonged, is one of those groups on a recognised cease-fire. Dessie's co-accused have all since been released, yet Dessie, who is Officer-Commanding of the INLA prisoners in Portlaoise Gaol in Ireland, has been denied release by the Irish government, even though he is recognised as a qualifying prisoner. Such is the propaganda and mythology that surrounds Dessie O'Hare and his role in the struggle for national liberation, and such is the punishment for being an unrepentant and dedicated republican socialist.

While Dessie has been the focus for many in and out of the IRSP, by no means is he the only INLA prisoner we support. Along with the remaining 6 INLA prisoners held with Dessie in the Irish Republic, the IRSP also has a network to assist over 500 former INLA prisoners (with over 4000 immediate family members) re-adjust to life outside prison.

This network, Teach na Failte (House of Welcome), was established in December 1996 after numerous discussions amongst Republican Socialist (INLA) ex-prisoners, serving prisoners and their families. While prisoners belonging to other republican (and loyalist) groups have long enjoyed generous financial and other support, INLA prisoners have not enjoyed the same benefits of an extended network, and have suffered both in and out of prison because of this.

The IRSP recognised this inequity, and Teach na Failte was established for the relief of poverty amongst current and former prisoners, and in particular, to provide support, care, aftercare and facilities (including education and capacity-building training), in an effort to empower them with the skills necessary to fully integrate into the wider community.

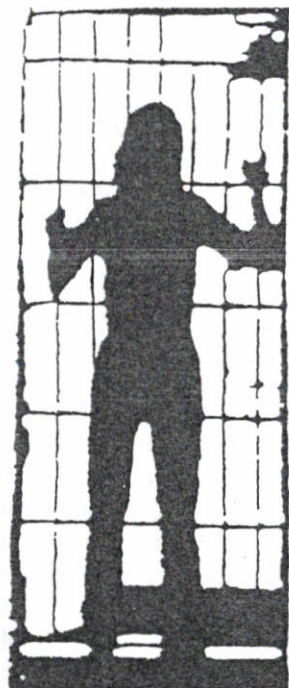
TnF is a recognised charitable organisation with local committees throughout Ireland, and is seen as a vehicle for change, based on the principle of self-help and mutual aid, to address the needs of a particularly-marginalised section of the community, thus promoting and assisting justice, peace and reconciliation in Ireland.

We are confident that by the time the next ABC newsletter goes to print, we will be able to report on the release of Dessie O'Hare and on the continued work of TnF in service to current and former INLA

Kebby Warner #259737
 Scott Corr. Facility
 43500 Five Mile Road
 Plymouth, MI 48170
 (People Against Court
 Kidnapping P.A.C.K.)

Barrillee's new zine
Tenacious available
 (edited by Vikki Law)

Barrillee Banniser
 #11309597
 E.O.C.I.
 2500 Westgate
 Pendleton, OR 97801



Lisette Orellana
 HC-02 Box 4788
 Guayama, P.R. 00784
 desintegrados@hotmail.com



cruz negra anarquista
 ESTAN POR
 TODOS LADOS Y
 NO SE LES VE
 EN NINGUN
 LADO... TRAS
 REJAS ESTAN
 SIENDO ORDEN-
 ADOS... CADA
 MOMENTO ES
 TIEMPO DE
 MATAR.
 SE NOS QUIERE
 VACIOS Y VENCIDOS,
 SUMISOS...
 la carcel:
 OTRA INSTITU-
 CION DE ENTAN-
 O A BENEFICIO
 DE LOS MISMOS.
 SE UTILIZA N
 TODO TIPO DE
 CIENCIAS... LAS USAN CONTRA TU CONSCIENCIA,
 CONTRA TI. **¡BAJAJO LOS MUROS DE LAS
 PRISIONES!** ¿Quien dijera no se puede?
¡ORGANIZACION, RESISTENCIA, LUCHA!
¡PRESOS-LIBRES-TODOS-YA!
 HC-02 Box 4788
 Guayama, Puerto Rico 00784 / abc_cna@
 hotmail.com

immigrants or refugees; health care, child care, food and rents go out of reach in costs; and their "choices" are nothing more than setups to lock them away. Public policies target youth in systematic and institutional ways that hinder the realization of human rights. Racist and discriminatory institutions and organizations, such as the police, prisons, and border controls and police target people, particularly Third World/people of color and immigrants, via public policies. Revolutionaries who speak out and fight against the conditions of society are imprisoned or killed. And we are expected to stand by until they come for us, if they haven't done it already.

What follows is a new proposal for an Anarchist Black Cross Network. It reconsiders and adopts many of Komboa's old ideas, as well as makes practical suggestions for building an anarchist network of independent groups united in fighting incarceration, repression and injustice worldwide. Many of the European ABC comrades have already taken the initiative to start the building process of this network, so the idea is not new. This effort is merely to put an explanation to a tendency that is already developing and will continue to grow.

Purpose

The Anarchist Black Cross Network should be a decentralized and egalitarian network of organizations committed to the original ideals of the Anarchist Black Cross movement — of seeing prisons and the poverty, racism and genocide that accompanies them to be symptoms of a social order whose last days are near. The proposed purposes of the ABC Network are:

- To unite the many autonomous prisoners, activists and organizations working for prisoner support, defense and freedom in a decentralized, anti-authoritarian fashion. There has been some fractionalization of the struggle, for various reasons, over the years. Certain groups defended certain prisoners, while paying lip service to others. Certain activists stayed focused in a particular issue, but didn't have the resources to get involved elsewhere. The purpose of the ABC Network should not be one of waging battles over differences, but of finding ways to unite us in a way that is still decentralized and anti-authoritarian. Whether you do work around earth liberation prisoners, "social prisoners," those recognized internationally as political prisoners, anti-colonial/independence prisoners, juvenile injustice, refugee/immigrant criminalization, the roots of prisons (i.e. poverty, capital, racism, et al.) should only be important to an ABC Network as far as how the unity of many groups that truly see 'an injury to one is an injury to all' can help your work. The job of a network, clearly, is not to change a group's current work, but to be a compliment to the work already being done.
- To serve as a clear and easy-to-use communications tool for activists, prisoners, organizations, families and supporters around issues related to the movement. If it is to be effective, the ABC Network must primarily serve as a communications and working base for prisoners, community people, activists, groups (i.e. autonomous ABC groups and anarchist, prisoner, liberation, freedom, justice, anti-colonial/independence and/or issue-oriented community groups, etc.) and others who engage in activities consistent with the basic spirit and vision of the ABC movement. So often, groups and organizers change, prisoners are transferred, new campaigns start and old campaigns end. This would be an effort to facilitate communication around varied issues — from the latest transfers, to disbanded collectives to international support efforts and so on.
- To support, discuss, learn from and engage one another around the Defense and Freedom activities we engage in. As state repression increases, more and more activists are facing fines, prison time, detention without charge, etc. for speaking out. Refugees/immigrants are being criminalized over race and class. Prisoners who were incarcerated for explicitly political acts are being denied parole again and again. Prisoners who went to prison for "social crimes" are coming to consciousness about the true nature of incarceration. And prisons will continue to be built in the name of law and order. These are issues 'regular' people are aware of and which activists are often fighting around in a regional, sometimes isolated, way — not necessarily by choice, but because all-around support needs to improve. As those familiar with anarchist prisoner Ali Khalid Abdullah's "Where Was the Support for Lorenzo Komboa Ervin and the Chattanooga 3?" will recall, one of our major issues is around unity. The ABC Network is aimed at getting prisoners, community people, activists, groups (i.e. autonomous ABC groups and anarchist, prisoner, liberation, freedom, justice, anti-colonial/independence and/or issue-oriented community groups, etc.) and others learning from each other, communicating and working together around the various campaigns, and finding ways of educating each other with our experiences in a clearer, yet anarchist, way.

Anarchist Black Cross

Houston's Newsletter: Updates, Thoughts, & Opinions—Inside & Out June 2002 #11

"Solidarity is a Weapon"

Houston ABC/P.O. Box 667614/Houston, TX 77266-7614/USA

New Houston ABC Mission Statement

The Houston Anarchist Black Cross is an autonomous prisoner support collective. It is our aim to provide aid to political prisoners, prisoners of war, and fight back prisoners, and it is our duty as anarchists to politicize those imprisoned by society for social crimes. Our focus is to work towards a society free of the state, the prison-industrial complex, and (oppressive) social restrictions in general. We strive to:

- educate others about the existence of political prisoners, especially in the U.S.
- advocate on behalf of political prisoners politicized prisoners in whatever way we can
- provide an outlet for those in prison by publishing them in their own words
- network with other ABC collectives worldwide, thereby loosening the grip of global capitalism one letter at a time

Write to us at:

Houston ABC
P.O. Box 667614
Houston, TX
77266-7614
USA

Write to other ABC collectives in Texas:

Dallas/Fort Worth ABC
P.O. Box 202846
Arlington, TX 76006/USA

e-mail: DFW_ABC@anarchistblackcross.com

Austin ABC *New!*
P.O. Box 684261
Austin, TX 78768-4261/USA
austin@anarchistblackcross.org

• To connect with a movement that understands the "single issues" are part of a much larger movement for freedom, and to work actively to see that struggle grow globally and in all communities. On the surface, fighting for political/class war prisoners, supporting earth liberation prisoners, challenging juvenile injustice, political repression, dealing with criminalization of communities marginalized by the state (such as refugees/immigrants, the homeless and the working class/poor), the death penalty and race/gender disparities in incarceration seem like a mix of issues. In reality, most anarchists and others see these are part of a campaign by the state to attack communities and people. The ABC Network should be part of a movement that understands we all wage a common struggle.

Clearly, a network could take on more goals, but these are merely a start.

Goals

The ABC Network should serve to support collectives around the work they currently do rather than coordinate a set of tasks for collectives in which to participate. Tasks that most community people, activists, groups (i.e. autonomous ABC groups and anarchist, prisoner, liberation, freedom, justice, anti-colonial/independence and/or issue-oriented community groups, etc.) and others engage in already, and which affiliates of the ABC Network should serve to help with via strength in numbers include:

Defense and Freedom Work of the Network

Defense work involves meeting the needs of the prisoners: whether those needs stem from the daily oppression of the prisons, police, courts or the intense repression by State/Class authorities of prison organizers. Prison support by ABCs meets these needs in many ways:

1. Forming outside support groups on a local and national basis in order to ensure prisoners' defense and survival from enemy attack and from inhuman prison conditions.
2. Organizing defense committees on behalf of prisoners framed or railroaded through the Capitalist courts for their political and social beliefs or prison organizing.
3. Organizing support for activists jailed for their outside work and/or repression by authorities.
4. Securing Anarchist and other revolutionary materials for prisoners to read, and fight for their right to receive this literature if prison officials try to ban or prohibit such literature for any reason.
5. Organizing emergency response calls, letters, faxes and email to continually contact "corrections" and other authorities about the treatment of prisoners.
6. Organizing legal defense funds to raise funds for legal fees and to assist prisoners and outside activists and groups.
7. Organizing correspondence for people to write to prisoners and find out about prison conditions and to show their solidarity and human concern, and observers to go into the prisons, visit the prisoners, investigate their complaints, question the officials and monitor the prison for violation of prisoners' rights.

Freedom work means directly challenging the existence of prisons and this work also involves actively campaigning against prison conditions, and propagandizing the actual cases of political/class war prisoners (i.e. prisoners jailed for specific political reasons and those who have become politically aware of the reasons for their oppression while in prison, as well as victims of frame-ups) to the largest possible audience.

Some protest activities many prisoner support, anti-prison and ABC groups engage in today:

1. Linking up the struggles against criminalization and imprisonment with associated social ills: poverty, homelessness, hunger, gentrification, racism, racial/cultural profiling, anti-refugee/immigrant actions, privatization, globalization, the drug war and many other issues.
2. Exposing the fallacy of the Capitalist system of cops, laws and prisons being for the protection of society or as a social necessity.
3. Educating the community, prisoners and others about the class/racist nature of the prisons and the legal system and how to fight against it.
4. Holding protest rallies, marches and street demonstrations in support of prisoners' rights and against the repressive actions of State/Class authorities.
5. Writing press releases and holding news conferences for the Third World/people of color,

FRIENDS OF THE A.B.C.

Attention free-worlders! Revolutionary greetings to you all - here's a call for your solidarity and support! As you undoubtedly would imagine, maintaining a prisoner support collective such as the ABC requires amounts of money to be spent continuously. Things like postage, stationery, copies, and commissary items for prisoners ALL cost money, and more often than not, the money comes out of the pockets of the collective members. We understand this is inevitable to some degree, but it can be quite a financial drain, considering we all are wage slaves, and have lives to support outside of the collective. So, we are introducing the "Friends of the ABC" program. Here's how it works:

***you send us a monthly contribution (\$5 is suggested, but larger or lesser amounts are always welcome)

***our collective will send you our bi-monthly newsletter, as well as a monthly info-sheet, which is in the works. The info-sheet will consist of updates on our collectives in Texas, and what we've been up to. It is being put together by Austin ABC, and should see the light of day soon.

***People on the subscription list will continue to receive the newsletter, as usual.

***Prisoners, of course, are not asked to send us money or otherwise deplete their resources on our behalf - we're here for you!

Months and months of organizing finally led to the first ABC Conference since '94 here in the US, the last ABC Con. that happened outside the US was in Ghent, Belgium June 2001 where ABC chapters from 9 different countries came together to discuss the need for a Network of autonomous ABC's to further its aims. This is still in practice. 54

July 26-28th, '02 at the UT Campus in Austin, TX the Conference began. This was with the major help of concerned activist and/or the collectives they're apart of in Austin, TX. Kudos to the Campus Greens in Austin for helping us get rooms at UT for the 3 day event. At Monkey Wrench Books we had people get registered for the Conference where they received directions to the rooms at UT and directions to their designated housing that we provided.

The first two days were filled with workshops on such topics as Mumia Abu-Jamal's situation, a Huntsville Eight update, INS Detention, Women in Prison, Politicizing social prisoners, Writing and visiting prisoners and much more. As well as speaking by Anthony Rayson, Chris Plummer, Robert King Wilkerson, Ernesto Aguilar and Lorenzo Kamboa Ervin. While also providing breakfast, lunch and dinner, and two shows- one each night- to benefit the Network and its goals.

The third day was the ultimate drive behind this entire ordeal that close to 200 people from all over the US, including folks from Australia and Canada, came for. This was to discuss the future roles that the ABCN would have on the anti-prison/prisoner support movement. Committees and goals that spawn from it are such:

- Why are we here? / Mission statement
- Setting up a National Office
- Working groups for people of color
- Working groups for women in prison
- Research Committee with prisoner participation
- Formation of a Publishing collective / ABCN Newsletter
- Create a fundraising goal / Budget
- Coordinate a campaign against private prisons
- Revolutionary Trust Fund for prisoners
- Campaign to oppose prison labor
- Form a critical analysis of prisoner support work in the post 9-11 environment with a focus on INS Detention centers

And finally, Eugene, OR folks have offered to host the 2003 ABCN Conference set for June. They plan to host a broader Conference on prisoner support followed by a specifically ABCN Con.

To conclude, my intentions for writing this article was not to focus on the ABCN, but am inspired to write it for what I hope will be, as one put it "The best fucking thing that has ever happened to the anti-prison/prisoner support movement here", lets see to it that this be held true, a relentless resistance.

Peace- Eric/Austin Anarchist Black Cross Network

PO Box 694264, Austin, TX 78768
austinaabc_@hotmail.com

REMEMBER!

THEY'RE IN THERE FOR US, LET'S BE THERE FOR THEM.

alternative and radical news media (and sometimes the Capitalist news media) appearing on television and radio news and/or talk shows to discuss prisons 7

6. Organizing and/or participating in coalitions with poor people's movements, prison support, Third World/people of color, Women's rights, Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgender, Church, Left-wing, and other diverse groups, so as to win them over and to integrate the prison struggle into the general movement for social change.
7. Assisting prisoners in getting parole, probation or a pardon by demanding their freedom when they become eligible for parole or are seeking executive clemency.
8. Working against the death penalty and exposing it as an instrument of racial genocide and class and political repression.
9. Demanding the freedom and amnesty of political/class war prisoners, and the abolition of prisons. Especially demand the immediate release of prisoners who have served unnecessarily lengthy sentences.
10. Demanding the immediate closing of all control/isolation/supermax units in prisons.

Any ABC Network that forms should encourage, but not mandate, a diversity of tactics as suggested here and more. The network's proposed communications purpose could certainly also be utilized to help build unity around regional cases and tactics (i.e. demonstrations at consulates, etc.).

Structure and principles

The ABC Network should foremost intended to accomplish the goals above among the many autonomous groups that are doing the grassroots, day-to-day work around campaigns, prisoners, criminalization and liberation. What unites us are the principles mentioned by Komboa - of struggling to expose injustice, corruption and oppression, supporting prisoners who (consciously or unconsciously) are combatants against the state; providing advice and support to activists who put their bodies on the line in defense of freedom and revolution; and seeing our continued activism, campaigns, etc. in the larger picture of prison abolition and revolutionary change - as well as our own experiences in creating conditions for change.

There should be no "party line" of the ABC Network. As anarchists, we believe in building a culture of resistance rather than legislating it. How you or your group conducts your effort must solely up to you, although you may want to link up to some activists and resources, work through ideas, learn together and help in others' campaigns. But regardless, how you organize your group must still up to your local conditions and membership.

The ABC Network should do its work in a broad, nonsectarian manner. You should not have to be explicitly named an ABC group to join. Conformity to certain naming, uniform moral/"security" codes, focus, etc., all correctly criticized in previous work, cannot be part of a successful initiative. This is a fundamental difference between the proposed Network and previous initiatives - having the involvement, input, comments, criticisms and efforts of local organizers, prisoners and groups is a necessity and privilege for an ABC Network to take shape. It is not a necessity or privilege for a network to form and communicate with activists... loose, unannounced networks are already happening. This is merely an effort to make it stronger and unite many around the ideas we're already struggling toward.

Prisoners should be involved in discussions and with area collectives or those collectives supporting the particular prisoner. In many cases, collective-prisoner relations already are building, and everyone should seek to learn how those communications are coordinated and developed among groups. How prisoners feel about the development of the Network is critical to its success and they should be consulted about all of its facets.

Issues of racism and sexism are critical to deal with in the movement as a whole, and all groups should take genuine measures to involve women and Third World/indigenous/people of color in campaigns and, as often as possible, local groups - not only by having their bodies around, but engaging minds and seriously taking those ideas/comments and criticisms to heart. Too often, male- and white-dominated groups have not made the efforts to broaden and involve other communities, or women's input has not been taken with the consideration and seriousness needed. Add to this the need to build stronger ties with women prisoners. This must be improved, and, ideally, an ABC Network can dialogue around strategies groups are utilizing to be more egalitarian in approach.

If we are to improve an ABC Network, hearing comments and criticisms should be a regular part of discussions. About every six months, affiliated groups with the ABC Network, activists, prisoners and

others should be asked to give their comments, criticisms and suggestions for how to make the Network better, stronger and more helpful to each others' needs. While the purpose of this is not to develop "legislation," it is intended to get people regularly thinking about how we work together and how the Network stays relevant to our unity. However, please know that the floor should be always open to raise comments/ideas/critiques, etc. We must welcome these ideas, because discussion, debate and joint resolutions are how we become more effective.

Conclusion

In June 2001, Anarchist Black Cross groups from around Europe met in Ghent, Belgium. People from Italy, Poland, Czech Republic, France, Luxembourg, UK, Holland, Germany and Belgium agreed that a network of autonomous groups would be formed to further the aims of the ABC. In their post-conference statement, attendees concluded:

"We believe in the abolition of the prison system, but not only that, but the destruction of capitalism and all kinds of authority. We believe the struggle against the (in)justice system, as it is against capitalism, is international. Therefore recent attempts by European governments (e.g. Europol in Spain 2001) to criminalise the anarchist movement must be opposed by all revolutionaries. We respect the variety of ways people resist government violence and terrorism, and will support those incarcerated by the state. We strive to provide practical and material aid for class struggle prisoners and to encourage support for them."

The groundwork is already laid for an international ABC network to unite autonomous groups. In Europe, this network has already come into being. It is a network that respects the autonomy of each group to act within the different circumstances of their own local situations. It is a network urging support for political prisoners. And it is one that understands that support is only one part of our true struggle -- for freedom, revolutionary change and anarchy.

Over the last 15 years, the Anarchist Black Cross and anarchist prisoner support movements have inspired new awareness in repression, of the need to work with those criminalized by society in an effort to build a more liberated world, and to develop tactics and strategies addressing prisons, law and social problems. The ABC movement was building on these efforts long before these issues got attention from the mainstream media. Nevertheless, our struggle can continue to grow and see more victories.

Many of these ideas restate Lorenzo Ervin's original draft proposal, although many ideas presented therein are worth supporting, such as an ABC conference (to potentially unite the North American section of the network, since a European conference happened in 2001) or a newspaper that reaches out to people on incarceration. Uniting the many prisoner-written zines into a "news service" of information could also be helpful. In addition, working with various forces to create ABC-oriented radio/Internet programming could also come together. Uniting our organizing to develop theory and strategy around crime, class and liberation is another possibility.

Comments/Criticisms/Interest

If you have comments, (any kind of) criticisms and/or suggestions to improve this proposal or are interested in dialoguing locally and possibly building a group or affiliating your own group, get in contact with the initiating group (Aniprison, Austin ABC, Houston organizing group) via email at abc-net@anarchistblackcross.org or via post at P. O. Box 667233, Houston, Texas 77266-7233, USA.

All comments, criticisms and/or suggestions received by January 31, 2002 will be compiled (we won't use your verbatim statements unless you ask) and an update to those interested. Get in touch.

New Draft Proposal issued on 5 November 2001.

Anniversary of the 1862 death sentence for 303 Santee Sioux for taking part in a Minnesota uprising.

US President Abraham Lincoln commutes many sentences, but 38 chose to hang at Mankato, singing their death song on their scaffold.

would only get banished if they banish themselves, make sense? If your chapter fails or has become defunct that is at the fault of your own collective (and possibly other autonomous ABC's as well, we must look out for one another) but you can't actually get banished from an autonomous ABC, who will banish you? Only you. But Indy ABC's and the Federation don't mix, not to stir up shit, but there is a defining difference between the two and I think that folks should know this- as we get confused all the time for being as one. The above hopefully clears some of the confusion up, but to let it be known we are not as one.

Our affiliates are a larger component to this war we wage against the incarceration of freedom fighters, victims of the drug war and victims of poverty-, which are a direct result of class division- as well. Such groups like the Earth Liberation Prisoner Support Network, Anarchist Prisoners' Legal Aid Network, Move 9, Animal Liberation Front Support Group, the Free Mumia Abu-Jamal coalitions, November Coalition, Prisoners' Activist Resource Center, the many "Books Through Bars" type collectives like Inside Books Project, etc (forgive me if I've left some groups out) stand in existence, too.

So, if we truly do seek a change- or hopefully destruction- in the heart of the prison complex why do we stand separate? All groups have different agenda's, practices and ideals, but at the same time we do have background similarities that should be recognized, these similarities should help set aside our differences. We must exhaust these similarities to benefit the life and struggle of those we love so dearly.

In early 2002 a revised addition of "A Draft Proposal for an Anarchist Black Cross Network" was introduced from one individual to another, originally presented by Lorenzo Kamboa Ervin in 1979. The Network's purpose is to:

- Unite the many autonomous prisoners, activists and organizations working for prisoner support, defense and freedom in a decentralized, anti-authoritarian fashion.
- To serve as a clear and easy-to-use communications tool for activists, prisoners organizations, families and supporters around issues related to the movement.
- To support, discuss, learn from and engage one another around the Defense and Freedom activities we engage in.
- To connect with a movement that understands the "single issues" are part of a much larger movement for freedom, and to work actively to see that struggle grow globally in all communities.

Seeing such need for this Network people dialogued and spent countless hours presenting it to the anti-prison movement through means of the international ABC list-serves and snail mail. Within month's communications of the masses brought constructive criticisms, a good reception and seeing the need for this to go forth. By this time we had to present the idea to those it sought to benefit the most, those in prison.

The Draft Proposal was sent into the prison walls so that our comrades could give their comments, criticisms and/or suggestions to improve this proposal and inform them of what we are constructing in their name. There comments, were put up on the anarchistblackcross.org website, which continued more discussions.

As constant communications prevailed the thought of an Anarchist Black Cross Conference appeared in the mix, after debates of "who, when and where", it was settled that one of the initiating groups would host it in their city, Austin, TX.

Anniversary of the 1928 banana workers' strike in Colombia against the United Fruit Company, in which 1,000 workers were killed.

Anniversary of the 1916 Everett, Washington, Massacre, in which seven Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) labor activists are murdered by Everett's police as part of a campaign to suppress working class resistance.

Revolutionary love and solidarity!

Minutes of the July 2002 Anarchist Black Cross Network meeting in Austin, Texas



Agenda:

Introductions
 Why Are We Here? / Mission Statement
 Immediate Goals
 Keeping In Touch
 Next Year
 Mentoring
 Outreach/Speaker Bureau
 Starting ABC Groups

A Call To Action:

Introductions

People were present from:

Austin ABC, Houston ABC, ABC-Melbourne (Australia),
 Upoar (Dallas), Positive Youth (Pennsylvania),
 Freedom Socialist Party (Seattle), Books Through Bars
 (Philly), Philadelphia ABC, APLAN-Portland (Oregon),
 South Chicago ABC, Western Prison Project, Alvaro Luna
 Hernandez Defense Committee, Phoenix Copwatch, New
 York ABC, Huntsville 8, Irish Republican Prisoner
 Network-North America, San Antonio Prisoner Defense
 Committee, Earth First (Tucson, AZ), Break the Chains
 (Eugene, OR), Northwest Earth Liberation Support
 Network (Eugene, OR), Friends of the Missouri Prisoner
 Labor Union, Industrial Workers of the World-Austin,
 Fort Worth, TX, Albuquerque, NM, Lawrence, KS,
 Louisville, KY, Santa Cruz, CA, Providence, RI, North
 Carolina, Virginia, Laredo, TX

Why Are We Here? / Mission Statement

Proposal: A short (5-10 sentence) Mission Statement
 will be drafted by a working group. They will publish
 the Mission Statement on an ABCN list serve.

The Mission Statement should include the ideas of
 autonomous groups, communication, accountability,
 self-critique and an annual meeting. Basic principles
 include working with communities of color, prison
 abolition, organizing to win, smashing capital. The
 working group should use the New Draft Proposal as a
 model for their work.

So, as we continue to lock up the "hard core" drug offenders that take up more than half
 the prison population- despite the fact that these "drug users" majority of the time are
 non-violent "offenders"-, the mothers writing bad checks to pay the bills, the robbers who
 normally do it out of poverty purposes, and the ones fighting day in and day out to stand
 for what they believe in. Where are we? Where is this anti-prison movement here (despite
 abroad)?

In 1917 -though many claim earlier than that- a group of concerned anarchists in
 Tsarist, Russia banned together creating the Anarchist Red Cross, which quickly changed
 its name to the Anarchist Black Cross in order to halt confusion of the international Red
 Cross. The purpose of the Anarchist Black Cross (aka ABC) was to assist fellow
 protesters from being beaten by the Cossacks (police)- as it was at the heels of the
 Russian revolution- to aid comrades from Cossack attacks in their homes, but then as the
 imprisonment of these radicals increased the ABC changed its direction to support these
 now Political Prisoners. The ABC has long lasted its support for PP's over the many
 years of its existence and only for a mere few years- due to financial failure- was it
 defunct, in the 60's. By the 1980's it made its way to the US, and by this time the ABC
 name had made it world wide- as well as its practice- the arrival and forming of the ABC
 movement here was at the help of Lorenzo Kamboa Ervin (a now ex-political prisoner
 himself, as well as a prolific writer and strong activist/speaker).

Like any group that spreads its wings to become more than simply a name to recognize
 it branched out, ABC chapters are of a large degree and have/are, making an impact and
 they do so accordingly to the history of the name, the practice and purpose. But, one
 thing to keep in mind is that like all groups that have branches they can lose chapters, this
 is due to a number of reasons, whether it be financial, lack of collective effort in finding
 direction/progressiveness or individual dedication. But one thing seems to remain, that
 since the minor fall out in the 60's ABC's have held their ground ever since, even if it is
 to simply keep the group afloat.

The Anarchist Black Cross focuses its attention on political prisoners in particular, but is
 not restricted to just that, over the years we've found that a broader spectrum has been
 taken up- though I personally do not believe quite enough. It's anti-prison activity in
 general that should be looked at and practiced in much more depth, we can support
 political prisoners all we want, but if we don't take up a front against the entire prison
 industrial complex as a whole then we remain confined to supporting just PP's. Maybe a
 shitty way to look at it but if we fail to recognize the prisons as our focal point (or at least
 background direction) then we are perpetuating the problem and people will continue to
 become PP's.

Each ABC chapter is completely autonomous and has the right and free will to support
 whomever they choose, how they go about it and where there resources come from and
 the "by-laws" or "guidelines" they place on themselves is all in there hands as well, as
 mentioned, so long as we/they stick with the roots of its purpose. The only ABC chapters
 that do not necessarily fall into play with some of the above mentioned are the Federation
 chapters (aka ABCF), the ABCF is a more tightly organized group of ABC's- though
 autonomous ABC's are tight as well, its mainly through our own individual collectives.
 The Federation has set out its own guidelines and by-laws that fall in category for all who
 wish to start an ABCF, the lines are drawn as you step up to the plate so you know what
 the Federation's goal is off the bat. It has autonomy, but in a much smaller degree (in my
 opinion that is), you can do as you wish, but your guidelines are already there to follow
 and anything outside it can be banishment from the ABCF. Whereas autonomous ABC's

The Mission Statement working group should be diverse.
The current list of people working on the mission statement is: /o

Chris P (Austin) <txuaf@yahoo.com>, Mitch (San Antonio), Sam (Austin), a woman (not yet named) from Chicago ABC, Mike L (Portland)

The deadline for a proposed Mission Statement is September 11, 2002.

Goals

This agenda item subsumed a number of other agenda items. In the end, we delineated short medium and long-term goals for the Network.
For the purposes of this list, Short Term means in the next 2 years, Medium Term means 2-3 years, and Long Term means 3 years and beyond.

Short Term Goals

1. Working group to write a proposal for the setting up of a national Office by 12/2002
2. Set up a working group to develop the voices of women and people of color within the ABCN this is projected as a short, medium and long-term goal.
3. Setting up an emergency fund to deal with the possibility of Chris Plummer being forced back to Prison by Sept. 30, 2002.
4. Setting up a Research Committee with prisoner participation by 9/2002
5. Formation of a Publishing Collective the collective should strive for a tidy, professional look by 11/2002. The first task of the publishing working group will be production of a conference follow-up newsletter.
6. Creating a fundraising Goal/ Budget by 11/2002
7. Creation of an Emergency Response Network

Medium Term Goals

1. Creation of a committee to coordinate a campaign against private prisons
2. Set up a group to focus on women prisoners
3. Form a critical analysis of prisoner support work in the post 9-11 environment with a focus on the INS Detention centers.

Long Term Goals

1. Smashing the State
2. Prison Abolition
3. Revolutionary Prisoner Trust Fund



AUSTIN ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS MISSION STATEMENT

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The Austin Anarchist Black Cross is an autonomous collective of concerned individuals dedicated to the support of anarchist political prisoners and anarchist social prisoners locally and abroad. We are entirely anti-prison and place the needs and safety of the prisoner first and foremost, and allow them to dictate the nature and type of support they receive. We provide correspondence, educational and financial resources, as well as visitation and distribution. We also network with other autonomous ABC groups and many other prisoner support organizations. We expose the truth about politically motivated incarceration, conditions, and the exploitation, slavery and corruption that goes on inside the prison systems. We believe that by supporting and educating those in prison is a revolutionary act in itself, as prisons are yet another tool that the state cannot and will not survive without. We lend support to social, political, class war, drug war, and fight back prisoners. Our collective uses consensus based decision-making process. By facilitating an equality-based alternative, we hope to transform the role of the prisoner into something more than merely a martyrdom. We make sure they are capable to live safely and are able to continue to organize while inside. We hope to uphold the values, ideals, and tactics of the original ABC. We feel that the anarchist anti-prison/prisoner support movement needs to work together in order to know what it truly means to fight to win; we do so through the ABC Network.

The only real job for the revolutionary is getting away with it.
PO BOX 19733, AUSTIN, TX 78760

Austin ABC & Inside Books to Prisoners is sponsoring a prisoner artwork & poetry exhibition, scheduled for March 22, 2003 - the first day of Spring*

RELENTLESS RESISTENCE:

FIGHTING FOR THOSE WE LOVE SO DEARLY

In the many years that the anti-prison movement has taken away here in the US we find that the numbers of incarceration continue to grow in vast numbers, the US has the highest rate of incarceration of any other country in the world!

In the past decade and a half the population of women prisoners has grown 400 percent, males are more than 50% likely to be in prison before their mid-twenties, death row inmates get closer to lethal injection each and every day- in TX we continue to rack up the numbers greater than the year before. Those imprisoned for a political act, what we call Political Prisoners, are getting larger sentences than most convicted murderers, and the rate of imprisonment for PP's is at its highest as it stands right now. For every one school there are two prisons, what Mumia Abu-Jamal calls graduate schools, out of this we find close to 2 million in prison right here in the "land of the free". The numbers never stop; it's mass production for bastards like Wackenhut, American Correctional Association, Corrections Corporation of America, and other leading private prison money-makers that thrive off the cheap labor of prisoners and the overall goal to build, build and build more prisons. These fucks literally check there stocks to watch them rise, those stocks, are in fact, our communities loved ones! Prisons are the highest money making businesses right now.

The total US prison budget is \$40,000,000,000.00! In Europe they have a rehabilitation system called "Harm Reduction", it costs 2/3's less than prisons, yet here we openly admit that we foster no real sight for rehabilitation, it's merely to "lock 'em up and throw away the key".

A peaceful, joyous demo took place Thursday afternoon amidst a sea of fully mobilized Chicago Gestapo police. A thousand of these police were ready to shoot, club, gas and capture - all for naught. The only person arrested this night was anarchist animal rights partisan & vegan, Mike Durschmid. He was charged with "cruelty to animals" even though he didn't so much as touch one of their poor horses. These police horses were forced to wear riot shields and several of them got spooked, causing the only real problems during this demonstration.

The next day, two women were arrested - for riding their bikes! Sear and other Chicago ABC members quickly organized a group of fifty people who clamored for their quick release from Cook County Jail. This they were successful at doing!

We meet fortnightly and have many ideas for projects, such as starting a subsistence program for certain prisoners, outreach programs, another Chicago ABC publication, punk shows and so on. We're creating more of a presence around town. Recently, a black youth was shot in the face and murdered by a Chicago pig and left in a breezeway for hours at the Cabrini-Green housing project. Some of us joined in a demo of outrage over this crime.

Anthony is involved with organizing forums in the southside to educate and empower black and latino youth in depressed suburbs, who've had a rash of gang murders and police harassment. He will also give a presentation at the College of Complexes on the Ides of March on the ABC-Network.

Through the So. Chi. ABC Zine Distro, *Off the Hook* #4, put

South Chicago ABC Zine Distro
Box 721, Homewood, IL 60430
200 ZINES!!

Prisoners
Anarchism
Abolitionism
Feminism

together by the NY-ABC collective, was distributed on Nov. 18. This is the organ of the Missouri Prison Labor Union (MPLU.) Many, many new zines have been added in 2002 and a catalog detailing them will be available by the end of the year. So, look for &/or ask for and order some of these mostly, prisoner zines or do so for prisoners looking for them. Anarchy & Liberation!*

Our goal, as always, is the mass release of our Brothers and Sisters from the hideous gulags (as was shown is totally possible by the mass release in Iraq.) Obviously, Iraqi society has been enriched by the return of these people, who hadn't already been murdered by the evil Saddam Hussein regime. We need our fighters on the outs, to help us destroy this monstrous death machine, that menaces everything held so dear on our planet.

4. Creation of a campaign to oppose prison labor and encourage worker resistance in every state system.

The following working groups were established during the conference. These groups are not closed, so people interested in joining a group should contact that group's point person. Working groups will confer on-line and via phone until they come up with a proposal. Proposals will be discussed on the list serve until a consensus is achieved. Point people are in Bold Print

Fundraising- Flanagan (PYF-pA), Chris P (Austin ABC), Heather (Phoenix Copwatch), Reckless P. (Austin ABC) National Office- Chris P <txuaf@yahoo.com>, Reckless P

Publication- Anthony R (So. Chicago ABC), Mike L.

(APIAN) <michaellee98103@yahoo.com>, Jess (Virginia), Houston ABC, John D (Austin), Flanagan Revolutionary Prisoner Trust Fund- Sam and Justice (Austin ABC)

People of Color Working Group- Ernesto A.

(ALHDC-Houston) <mav19x@yahoo.com>, Mitch (San Antonio), Puck (EF!), Jeannie (Austin Copwatch), Jess, Lorenzo E. (Michigan), Scott (Uproar-Dallas), Brenton (Break the Chains)

Women Prisoner Working Group- Sarah (Inside Books-Austin), Sam, Ann (Angola 3 Solidarity Campaign-Dallas)

Research Committee- Flanagan, Sarah, George Peters (prisoner Anthony will contact)

Keeping In Touch

We will use a combination of the anarchistblackcross.org web page, list serve and physical mailing list.

Chris will compile a mailing list based on the comments about the conference that people send to Austin ABC.

ABCN will request a page or two in anarchist journals and magazines to cover the conference and the network. Anthony R will put together a one-page review of the conference.



*Austin
 Anarchist Black
 Cross*

Next Year

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Eugene, Oregon has offered to host the 2003 ABCN conference in June 2003. They plan to host a broader conference on prisoner support followed by a specifically ABCN conference. Everyone is expected to assist in preparations for the conference (i.e. it is not solely on the Eugene folks' shoulders)

Mentoring

In recognition of the complexity and sensitive nature of prisoner support work, the ABCN will initiate a program to support people interested in going into prisoner support work. The goal of this program will be to insure the sustainability of the work. Mentors will be available to come to your town and help out in the initial period of a new ABC project. Mentors will also be available for phone and email consultations and advice. Interested people may also intern with a mentor at their home project. People interested in starting an ABC chapter are encouraged to take advantage of as many of these programs as possible. Get in touch with michaellee98103@yahoo.com for more information on mentoring

Outreach

Pam will coordinate the creation of a list of people willing to speak as representatives of the ABCN. People are encouraged to ask others who are not here to join the ABCN Speakers Bureau.

Priority Prisoner List

Ernesto, Webmaster of anarchistblackcross.org, will maintain a database of all political and social prisoners supported by the ABCN. The data base will include prisoner bios, current addresses and a list of prisoners whose current situations merit special attention.

Starting New ABC Groups

The ABCN will ask that people make a 5-year commitment before setting up a new ABC group. New groups are expected to use the mentoring network provided by the ABCN. New groups should work with existing groups both ABC and otherwise. Conflict Resolution is recognized as a very important aspect of organizing ABC groups. Each group is responsible for coming up with an appropriate form of conflict resolution for their group.

Also, during this time, we were organizing for a prisoner support rally at Cook County Jail, which took place on October 20th. We were involved organizing the October 22nd Against Police Brutality rally and march through the Loop, as well.

We've reached out to other prisoner support groups in Chicagoland, gone to meetings (and parties) and spread our abolitionist ideas, far and wide. We've sent much literature into the gulags and have worked with conscious prisoners on publications and supported some in other ways, as well.



Anthony Rayson, Robert L. King, Judith Katz (of Chicago Angola 3 Support) and Gale (Jane Doe) Ahrens at a Death Penalty Abolition Party at the University of Chicago, after a conference in November, 2002.

We've begun starting to work up a Books to Prisoners Program, with the folks from Words As Weapons, also based out of the A-Zone. Anthony has taken a few classic books, by such people as Peter Kropotkin, Alexander Berkman, George Jackson and Noam Chomsky and reformatted them into zines, to provide prisoners these texts, a sort of Books to Prisoners! He most certainly loves powerful anarchist/prisoner zines and looks for ways to get them into the hands of our prisoners!

The Trans-Atlantic Business Dialogue met in Chicago, also during October. The self-blindfolded mainstream media finally discovered the Autonomous Zone and Robb Ebright of Chicago ABC became the "spokesman" for this week of agitation to them.

nearly impossible and extremely dangerous. In the spirit of John Brown and Nat Turner, we must stand in solidarity with all our brothers and sisters held captive by the state, aiding their struggles for liberation, and demanding with no compromise that an end be put to the enslavement of our fellow human beings.

New York City
Anarchist Black Cross
P.O. Box 20449
Tompkins Square Station
New York, NY 10009

Update from Chicago ABC

Since the July ABC-Net conference, Chicago ABC has been involved in several endeavors, mostly of an educational and/or organizing nature. We work closely with South Chicago ABC Zine Distro, formatting and distributing prisoner zines and getting information out on specific, important cases.

We traveled on a Midwest tour with the Chicago Surrealists to Champaign, St. Louis and Springfield, where forums were held to promote the new, 752 paged book, edited by Ron Sakolsky entitled, *Surrealist Subversions*. Gale Ahrens, of Chicago ABC, has contributions in this book. It can be procured through Charles H. Kerr Press, 1740 West Greenleaf, Chicago, IL 60626. We've also organized demonstrations, forums and been involved in coalitions organizing other demos and conferences and so on.

Our membership is slowly growing, as we are still based out of the Autonomous Zone, located at 2129 N. Milwaukee Avenue. July and August were busy months, as we spent a lot of time building up support and awareness of the case of Richard M. Flood. This sad situation culminated in the terrible sentence given to him by the nazi judge Daniel Rozak, on September 9th, in a Joliet, IL courtroom. This is very similar to the Mark Barnsley case, as he and his wife were the victim of a street assault, but he was prosecuted because of his political activity. He had been offered a "deal" that if he pled guilty, he'd have been out by Christmas of 2001. He refused to participate in a lie! A huge 80 paged zine entitled, *The Railroadings of Chicago Native Son Richard M. Flood*, is available through So. Chi ABC Distro.

NY-ABC offers their assistance in setting up a new ABC group.

/3

Statement Against the War On Terrorism
 The following statement was presented to the conference:

"The Anarchist Black Cross Network urges anarchists and activists everywhere to organize and resist Bush's war on terrorism and the coming U.S. war against Iraq."

The ABCN decided that autonomous groups could endorse the call but that the ABCN was not yet in a position to do so. Austin ABC and NY ABC both endorsed the call.

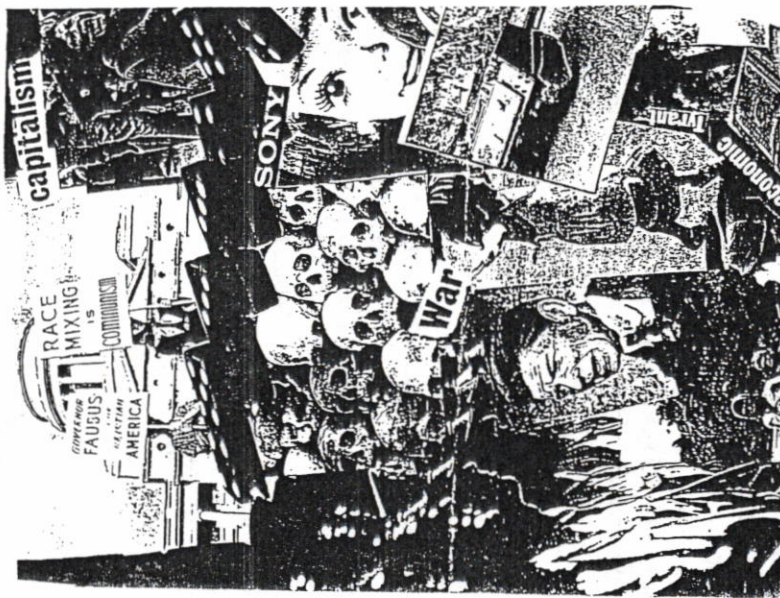
abc-net mailing list

abc-net@lists.mutualaid.org

<http://lists.mutualaid.org/mailman/listinfo/abc-net>

free hosting by <http://www.mutualaid.org>

IRAQ WAR!



War is the health of the state

Stefan Wray can be reached at swray@io.com.

See www.iconmedia.org for details about a 1 hour video called "United We Stand Against War."

What Are You Going To Do?

Statement by Lorenzo Komboa Ervin concerning the newly formed Anarchist Black Cross Network

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Comrades, Brothers & Sisters (and Everyone):

Recently, the Anarchist Black Cross Network held its founding conference in Austin, Texas (July 27-29, 2002.) I was in attendance, was a keynote speaker, and spoke to many of the 150 or so delegates at workshops, and different stages of the conference, when it recessed.

So that there is no misunderstanding by anyone, I want to clarify my status in relation to the ABCN. I cannot function as a member of the group at this time, but I do want to serve as an organization Mentor, because that is the best way I can help the group. It is also important that I maintain my neutrality around the internal politics of ABC movements generally, and cannot do that as a formal ABCN member. I do not want to see sectarianism become any worse in our movement, or serve as a distraction by folks wanting me to join this or that ABC tendency. The situation in Spain a few years ago let me know just how serious a problem this can become.

Coming in, I made it clear that I was only interested in the creation of a broader based Anarchist Black Cross as a viable movement in the United States, and saw the ABCN as a large part of that. I pointed out that I still supported the entire international ABC movement, even tendencies like the ABC Federation, that the leadership of this ABCN group might be opposed to. In fact, I would like to see a United Prison Front of both ABCN, ABCF, Critical Resistance, and all of the contemporary groups supporting prisoners and fighting racism, as well as Black/POC, women, Queer and other liberation groups, but of course that has to be your decision.

My sentiments have not changed, so only part of the reason for this letter is to clarify my status. I support the ABC movement now the same as I always have, from back in the day when I was a prisoner myself serving life imprisonment during the 1970's-1980's; but I am interested in ABCN only so far that it carries out its mission in dealing with racism, the mass imprisonment of the poor and peoples of color, as well as supporting prisoners inside generally, with material aid and political support. I believe that is the way to advance Anarchist politics and the prison struggle in this period. This is not the 1970's when there was still a revolutionary movement in this country on the outside, and a mass prison support movement already existed in the prisons and in the streets.

from the liberal reformist answer to state slavery. These reformist groups at best call for "humane" prisons dedicated to "rehabilitation." They fail to realize that the entire concept of crime and punishment is a false notion, in place only out of a necessity to protect the interests of the capitalist elite. As anarchists we must approach all prison issues with the desire in mind to abolish the prison system, and destroy the society which has deemed these slave encampments necessary.

With this in mind, why should prison support and abolition be a top priority of the anarchist movement? The belief that we as a society can enslave over 2 million people who have done nothing more than use drugs, fight poverty, or suffer from psychological imbalances, is a result of our entire basis for relationships. Anarchists are fundamentally opposed to an existence based on control, power, and hierarchy, and prisons are the most brutal manifestation of these injustices. It is crucial that anarchists fight to destroy the prison system in order to challenge these notions. The criminal justice system and the prison industrial complex further serve the power elites interests, in that they play a key role in maintaining the institutional racism and sexism in our society. As anarchists, we must realize that the largest injustice committed by the power elite is the continuous violence committed against women and people of color. In our fight for an anarchist society based on mutual aid and liberatory principles, one of our first priorities should be to attack the elements of society that uphold patriarchy and white supremacy.

The prison system is the most vicious tool used by the state in the violent repression of women and people of color. Continuing the practices of ante-bellum America, the prison system places people of color in cages for the purpose of profits, and as an answer to actions of resistance in the ghettos of America. Like the plantations before them, women's prisons depend on an atmosphere of misogynist relationships and sexual violence, as a means of maintaining the hierarchy necessary for institutionalizing poor women and women of color. Prison guards, the captors, use violence, sexual assault, and threats of further incarceration in order to maintain control over their captives. The sexual violence and brutality found in all prisons is combined with existing institutional racism and sexism, making collective organizing and resistance in prisons

Break the Chains returned from the Anarchist Black Cross conference refreshed and inspired, ready to begin new things and invite new people into this project. What was once a two to three person project is growing into a larger collective. By inviting newcomers (primarily folks we've worked with in the past on other projects) to work with us we will be able to directly aid more prisoners, more effectively. We are learning how to work as a collective, and facing growing pains as they come. This winter we are focusing primarily on supporting women at the Coffee Creek Penitentiary in Wilsonville, Oregon, which will include, but not be limited to, the radical women's correspondence project. This correspondence project, co-sponsored by Anarchist Prisoners Legal Aid Network of Portland, Oregon, will connect radical women on the outside with women at the Coffee Creek Penitentiary. In addition, this winter we will be working on the Children of the River Campaign: a campaign in support of Tawahnee Sahme, David "Looks Away" Scalera and Thomas Tripp (Tawahnee and Looks Away are American Indian prisoners and Thomas Tripp is an anarchist prisoner) - who were recently given additional time for participating in a jailhouse riot aimed at winning better educational programs for all prisoners, and religious rights for the Native prisoners. Thomas plans to join up with us when he is released from prison in approximately one year, and we intend to welcome him to our community with open arms. Tawahnee and Looks Away have much more time remaining, but we intend to help make their stay in prison more pleasant by actively working with them in their struggle against bigotry and colonialism, and providing them with material and emotional aid. We continue to actively support Jeffrey "Free" Luers and Craig "Crittter" Marshall, and we recently produced two different publications by, for, and about them (Free's zine is called *Let's Get Free: Writings by and about Eco-Defense Prisoner Jeffrey "Free" Luers*, Critter's zine is called *Fuck The System*. Both zines are available from us for \$5 each. Proceeds will go to the prisoners and to cover postage costs. We presently only accept well-concealed cash. Free's zine is also available from his defense network, Howl For Freedom, at PO Box 50263, Eugene, OR 97405. Checks for \$5 - or more, donations are always needed - can be made out to "Howl For Freedom"). In the coming months Break the Chains will host a variety of out of town speaking guests, including: author & activist Derrick Jensen, former political prisoner & longtime Native sovereignty and environmental activist Rod Coronado, author-activist-former political prisoner Splitting the Sky, former political prisoner and anti-prisons activist Ed Mead, and others. All proceeds from these events will go to the Children of the River, Critter, Free, and to local prison support projects. In the meantime, of course, we are beginning the arduous work of planning the national ABCN/Against Prisons conference for June of 2003. So, if you're planning to come through Eugene, or if you'd like to help us prepare for this conference, or you'd like to help prisoners in the Northwest, be sure to get in touch with us.

In solidarity,

Break The Chains

- Break The Chains: PO Box 11331, Eugene, OR 97440 USA. Email: breakthechains02@yahoo.com
Web address: www.breakthechains.net (our website is pathetically under-developed, but hopefully this will change soon).

WHY ANARCHISTS SHOULD GIVE A FUCK ABOUT PRISONS

The primary purpose of prisons in a capitalist society is to maintain the rigid castes that western imperialist countries depend on in order to exploit people for profits. The corporate media, politicians, and education systems claim that prisons exist for the purpose of "protecting society" from "criminal threats." This is a blatant lie, hiding the reality that prisons enslave people whose actions are a direct threat to notions of property and power. Aside from this, prisons brutally warehouse human beings with psychological imbalances, when we as a society should be providing care and aid to all our brothers and sisters. As anarchists, we must separate ourselves

In fact, I remember the original Black Panther Party not only had a Prison Commissary Program, but also had buses for transportation in many states to transport family members to the prisons, free legal aid for prisoners, and a prison survival program for those released on parole. So, the ABCF's War-chest or the proposed Revolutionary Prisoners' Fund are nothing new, but the Panthers understood that the material aid campaign had to be just part of a political campaign against prisons and the capitalist state. When George Jackson became Panther Field Marshall, he understood that there had to be a United Front for political prisoners, and the prison struggle had to be part of a broad front for social change allied with the then unfolding revolutionary struggle of women, Blacks, Xicanos and other groups oppressed by this capitalist society. So material and campaigns themselves are nothing new, and cannot be the reason of the existence of an ABC movement itself. It must connect with the masses of people.

During the conference, I openly expressed my point of view that since the majority of prisoners in the U.S. prison system are now Black, Brown, Asian or Native American, then this new movement must reflect that fact in both its membership and mission, if it is to have any credibility as something more than yet another white Left tendency running away from these issues. The idea of a movement made up of white radicals on the outside just charitably helping peoples of color on the inside has always been a source of controversy. The question for me is whether real attempts will be made by this newly formed ABCN to connect with the families and communities of these prisoners of color, as well as poor working class communities generally, and make them a part of the ABC campaign. That will tell me how serious this group is.

For me, I realized that this would require drastic and serious commitment by any ABC movement at the outset to ensure that the organization adopts a new focus. I was disturbed that during the deliberative stage of the conference, nobody even saw the necessity of raising this issue, that is nobody but myself. I expected someone to talk about a People of Color committee to recruit and organize. But no matter, it has been raised, now it must be implemented!

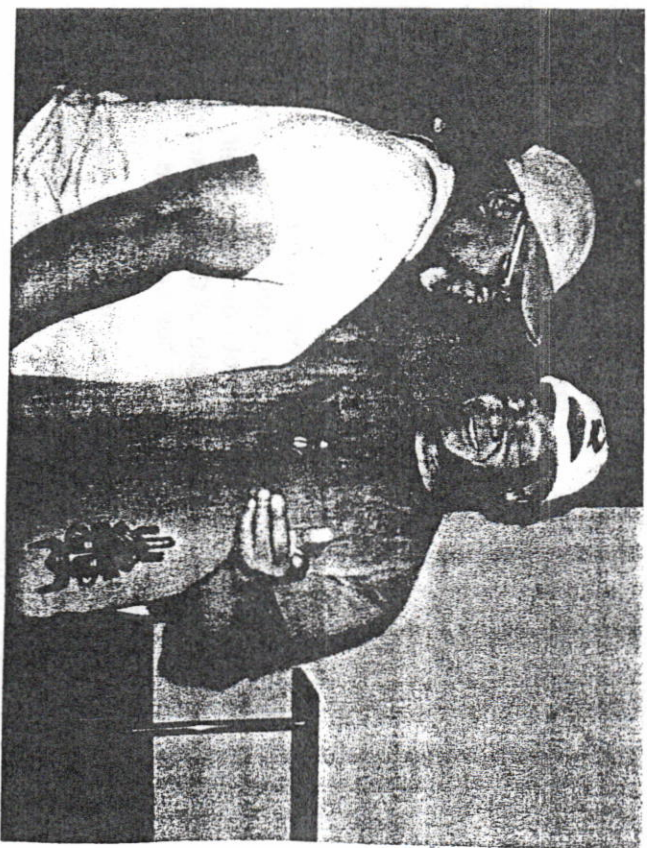
But to be effective: the newly formed People of Color organizing committee(?) needs to know where it is going, before it can then give guidance to the entire organization. Therefore, I want to make these points:

1. The POC body must be on par with every other deliberative body, and POC must be given a strong voice in all ABCN policies,

and not be a mere token effort. The ABCN leadership must be challenged by this POC body to live up to its mission and to make the movement inclusive to all. As for the POC committee itself, it should have a majority of members who actually are POC, but there is no requirement of an absolute majority.

2. The communities of color for the ABCN leadership and membership could be a major base of support. The POC body of ABCN should be a pole of attraction to not only bring peoples of color into the organization, but to insure that they have an equal voice in all matters of substance in the organization. This body should be consulted and made a part of any leadership. This recruitment has to be absolutely supported by the entire group, and not be minimized in importance.

3. Working with the leadership and mass membership of ABCN, which can develop out of the work of the conference, can connect them with a number of oppressed communities in Texas and other states. Clearly the ABCN must not just repeat the work of the ABCF, and its mistakes in ignoring these matters, even if it is critical of other ABCF policies. It must deal with racism and the right-wing offensive of this period itself. The trend of political imprisonment of masses of people, based on race, class, and genocidal terror should be the basis of a new mass movement, not just traditional Anarchist politics.



Lorenzo & Robert L. King talk shop

"The anarchist movement in Oregon has grown to where it is a serious concern to law enforcement, and the public, due to it's increased violence towards others. As such the so called "circle A" is a well known rallying point for those within the movement.

The policy of the Oregon Department Of Corrections is a zero tolerance for any STG related activity. Each publication is evaluated upon it's own merit and either accepted or rejected."

As you can see, these authoritarians, with self-appointed pompous vene, refuse to discuss or consider their intrusion upon inalienable humanitarian rights. And so I am bringing suit in the Oregon federal court system. I will be challenging the classification of anarchism as an STG, the over-broadness of this classification, and why there is no procedural due process vehicle in place to challenge, meaningfully or otherwise, this unilateral classification. I will be challenging the rejections based solely upon the symbols "circle A" and "Anarchist Black Cross". I will be challenging the denial of substantive due process where mail is rejected for "STG content" without identifying that content and without identifying why that content deserves rejection. Lastly, I will be challenging the conversion of my personal property in the form of the rejected mail/publications.

The court battle is expected to be drawn out and difficult. These are the common tactics of the Attorney General's office, the champion of "the people". At the same time as they are both dilating and avoiding the issues before the court the fascists will attempt to brand the issues as frivolous, malicious, and not constituting a legal claim upon which relief can be granted. Usually, and I make this statement without any naive pretense, the court will find for "the people" after giving much lip service to constitutional rights. Just the same, there is grandeur in the effort, the truths are self-evident, and we must not fear the path of truth for the lack of people walking on it. Anyone caring to comment to the court on these issues may do so by writing the court care of me: Brian McCarvill #11037967, OSP, 2605 State St., Salem, OR 97310.

Donations desperately needed!

The Oregon State Penitentiary consistently rejects anarchist publications. The radical community within the walls of OSP wishes to take the Oregon Department of Corrections to task in a civil rights lawsuit. Outside supporters have been unable to date to raise funds for legal representation. This writer, an experienced prison legal litigator, will soon file suit within the Oregon courts.

Litigation is expensive, even more so for prisoners without incomes. Donations, no matter how small, are urgently requested and can be made by sending money orders or cashiers checks only made out to: "The Prison Account of Brian McCarvill #11037967" and sent to: **Central Trust** PO Box 1440, Salem, OR 97309-5077.

If you can and do send a donation, please write to Brian McCarvill separately at: **Brian McCarvill** #11037967, OSP, 2605 State St., Salem, OR 97310

Issue #13 of Break The Chains is out!

This issue includes: "Honor America" by Lorenzo K. Ervin, our Editorial, updates on prisoners and state repression, poetry and articles by women prisoners in Oregon, info about the new Coffee Creek Women's Facility in Oregon, articles by and about anti-imperialist political prisoner Richard Williams, selections from recent statements by the Children of the River (anarchist and American Indian prisoners struggling against bigotry and injustice from inside), Rising Up in the Shadow of Death: Reflections on the 2002 ABC Conference by Ernesto Aguilar, articles by prisoners Walter James, Cassidy Wheeler, John Whalley, Anthony "Tigger" Vaughn, Keith Thomas (aka "K-Love"), + a Northwest political and social prisoners directory, info on new anarchist and prisoner literature, and more!

This is the largest, most in-depth, and best put together issue of Break The Chains yet and we hope that people will order copies so that we may send this out to our growing number of subscribers as soon as possible. Please send this message to your friends to help get the word out.

This issue is \$3 postage-paid (we accept well-concealed cash only) from BREAK THE CHAINS, PO Box 11331, Eugene, OR 97440 USA. Email: breakthechains02@yahoo.com for more info.

Anarchist Prisoners' Legal Aid Network
818 SW 3rd Avenue PMB #354 Portland OR 97204 USA

I think that perhaps instead of being against each other, we should unite against the guards, the wardens, the prisons, the government, examples of capitalism.

I can empathize with different ethnic groups who have suffered from racial discrimination and social oppression.

I realize that the United States is run by white-supremacist Capitalism and I am aware that this is very wrong.

Until recently I never had any type of contact with any anarchists.

I am just now beginning to understand how ignorant I have been and still am.

I keep an open mind and I share the literature that has been sent to me.

I need more !

Thank you Austin Anarchist Black Cross for helping educate me on life !

I would like to see all the prisons closed and have peace, love and equality throughout the world.

Eventually, with your help and mine uniting in solidarity, the flame of truth will spread like wildfire !

If anyone would like to comment or send me much needed literature I can be contacted at the following address:

Shannon W Stricker,

#1015467,

A.K.A. "Stryker",

1695 S. Buffalo Drive,

Raymondville, Texas 78580

Upcoming Prisoner Lawsuit Challenges Anarchist Repression - By Brian McCarvill

Anarchist and anarchist-friendly prisoners within the Oregon Department Of Corrections (ODOC) gulag have been and are being subjected to a steadily worsening crescendo of censorship of incoming mail and publications. This fascistic activity cannot be allowed to continue unchallenged or it will not be long before all material deemed anarchist related will be censored, with the terminology "anarchist related", like "beauty", being in the eye of the oppressor.

Currently, barring simple ineptitude on the part of the authorities, any piece of mail or publication displaying a "circle A" symbol or an anarchist black cross symbol is being rejected wholesale. This has held true even where the offending symbol is displayed in an news article photograph in a globally distributed magazine. This policy alone results in the rejection of most anarchist oriented publications. However, rejections sometimes are based upon, "Security Threat Group content" (anarchists have been identified by ODOC as a "Security Threat Group") without any reference to what content is actually threatening or why.

I recently wrote to Mike Beagan, ODOC STG Management "Inspector" asking for relief from the censorship and for an explanation as to what criteria and legal mechanism ODOC used to brand anarchists as a security threat group. This is the absurd Orwellian doublespeak I received back:

4. The POC committee is the one body that has to raise the issues of shaping the ABCN organization as an anti-racist movement to challenge the government over its drug war and its mass imprisonment of youth of color. Again, this cannot be minimized or emphasized enough. Frankly, I have always believed that it is a minimal program just to provide for the material needs of prisoners alone, while huge numbers of people are forced into prison and the death chambers. We must deal with the political reasons they are in prison in the first place, and oppose a racist death penalty. Mumia Abu Jamal is just a symbol of the racist death penalty. We must call for an immediate national moratorium on the death penalty. Shaka Sankofa's recent legal murder in Texas should tell us that we must organize in the streets to build a mass movement of poor and working class peoples, or Mumia is ultimately doomed. A movement of white radicals alone is neither desirable nor sustainable.

5. Two million people are in the U.S. prison system today, with a huge number coming from communities of color (50% or more.) The state of Texas incarcerates Blacks at a rate 7 times that of whites and has Chicanos/Mexicanos jailed as high as 20% of the state prison population. Similarly, 40% of the entire Black male and youth population in California is in prison; also 55% of the prison population of Pennsylvania is Black, though only constituting 10% of that state's population. Similar statistics are to be found all over the country showing that racial minorities are incarcerated at a rate of 10-15 times that of whites. This is clearly a new racism and a result of fascist social control, but we don't have any evidence that the Anarchist Black Cross movement understands this or is responding in any way to such a reality. It continues to see itself as a support group which has a limited role of sending \$20 a month, even though millions are now being incarcerated at an unprecedented rate. We cannot send aid to such a huge number, so we must tackle the root causes.

6. To have any relevance at all, the POC committee must be sure that ABCN leadership raises issues of fighting police brutality, police racial profiling, racist vigilantism, poverty, and other evils, and that they fight this in a revolutionary movement, not as a reformist group afraid to challenge the state on such matters.

7. I think that each one of the ABC chapters should have someone who handles the work of outreach to communities of color, and helps design policies for that chapter. If there is no one working on the local level, then this critical work simply will not be done.

8. The ABCN must fight for prison abolition as a goal, even while it fights for a moratorium on further prison construction and for redistribution of the money stolen from the school systems, hospitals, and other social sectors which have been de-funded to pay for prisons. We must oppose this mass incarceration and theft of money for social spending into prison construction.

9. I think that the ABCN must be willing to become part of mass coalitions around these issues, even while building its own politics and movement. For years, Anarchists and their movements have been too white, middle class and self-absorbed, only willing to give lip service about racial justice, class-based unity, and a truly liberatory movement inclusive of all and their demands.

Anarchism has been a white rights movement, and this must change. I believe that what we want the ABCN and the entire Anarchist movement to be is a grassroots, multiracial movement for justice. So, for the ABCN, this is both an opportunity as well as a challenge.

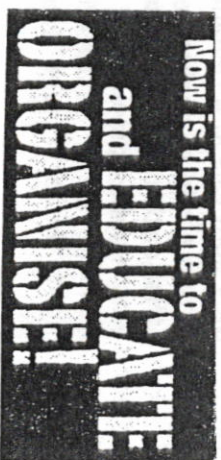
In my opinion, it is a good thing that the ABCN has had its founding conference, but that it must now be serious and committed enough to break new ground for the APC movement. We must popularize Anarchist politics and organizing on a mass scale, so that poor and working class people can relate to it, not just middle class, college trained whites.

I have made constructive criticisms here, but offered them in good faith. In skeleton form, there is also a plan which others can build on. I am not sure if the ABCN leadership or the membership wants me to continue to work with this POC body, if I am not a full member or in response to my critical support. I offer my services nonetheless. You will have to decide what you want to do. I am not personally seeking to lead this movement. I am available to help, but I want to see things done right, and it is not a "given" that they will be. I wish you great success from here on out, but you must make it real.

Sincerely,

Lorenzo Komboa Ervin

Lorenzo Komboa Ervin
c/o BANCO
P.O. Box 119962
Kalamazoo, MI 49109
komboa@yahoo.com



In prison, many times when negotiations with prisonkrats failed to bear fruit - or they didn't even consider our proposals - someone would always say, "Those people only understand ONE thing!" i.e. Attica, etc. Just as something as simple as a toy will POP if it is wound too tightly, so too will humanity. If courage is the ladder upon which all other virtues mount, we all need to call upon our inner selves - our true humanity and do the right thing. I call upon all people, in and out of prison to join our struggle. For "What is thine is mine, and all of mine is thine." - Plautus

I will close this with the words of John Dewey, from **Reconstruction in Philosophy** - "Since changes are going on anyway, the greatest thing is to learn enough about them so that we will be able to lay hold of them and turn them in the direction of our desires. Conditions and events are neither to be fled from nor passively acquiesced in; they are to be utilized and directed."

Incarceration & Racism

By Stryker

I am currently at a Wackenhut privately run prison.

I have been incarcerated for over 2 1/2 years, but I have only been here at Wackenhut for 1 1/2 years; I should be released next year.

I have spent many years in prison and have been to several units throughout the state of Texas.

Recently, I wrote a letter to the Austin Anarchist Black Cross, asking about their organization and what Anarchism was in general.

I was sent a package of literature, and when I read the contents, it seemed I was seeing the way the world really was for the first time.

Most of my life I have lived as a minority in the environment in which I grew up.

I was born and raised in San Antonio, Texas, and went to school in either an Hispanic-dominated school or a predominantly African-American school, depending upon which part of town I lived in at that time.

I was raised in a single-parent home and we were on welfare, so it was always in the poorest part of town.

As a minority in prison, I have never had any say in what was to be watched on television, and have had limited rights because the majority ruled.

I have seen several racial riots and men died because of racism; it's all very sad.

I continue to see the hate and the separation every day.

To be against a person because that person has different color skin than you doesn't make sense.

So, if you're not the same color as another individual, you should be that person's enemy?

On a global scale, up until the WTO talks in Seattle, I shared concerns with others regarding the fragmentation of the Left. Since then, we have witnessed solidarity between marxists, anarchists, feminists, environmentalists, labor unions, etc. This re-energized movement was not spontaneous initially, (with regards to Seattle) but now appears to have grown legs, as tens of thousands of protestors trek the globe in step with the "Brettonwoods Twins" (IMF & World Bank) and the bunkered down meetings.

Perhaps many progressive people, organizations and movements on the outside, took for granted that this now re-energized movement would find its way behind the walls of America's gulags. Or perhaps there is an oversight among some groups with regards to prisoners. This is no wonder as we have been isolated, ostracized and alienated, even from our own families. However, up until now, the inside movement has been somewhat stalled by extreme levels of repression and censorship. The few political prisoners with instant name recognition - Mumia, Peltier, "Maroon" Shoats and perhaps even myself, to a lesser degree - are fortunate enough to have very effective support systems in place. But what about the hundreds of thousands of unconscious wannabe's, the aforementioned lost souls, not to mention all the truly wrongfully convicted? Most people never hear their stories, however. We all have a story to tell, even the dull and the ignorant. Listen to us! The conditions of confinement across the board have regressed to pre-Attica proportions.

I was fortunate enough to be able to re-educate myself and others at a time when progressive literature was still available within prison. However, that is no longer the case as the level of censorship has reached "Orwellian" proportions. On the inside, we are being attacked on several fronts. First, any and all politically conscious prisoners, or paralegals, or even prisoners possessing "leadership qualities" are isolated in "Supermax" laboratories under the guise of some perceived "security threat." Next, the agent provocateurs, stool-pigeons and police collaborators are let out of "PC" (protective custody) and presented as leaders to the "fish" (newcomers to prison) by the prisonkrats. In this fashion, they are kept posted as to any possibility of a progressive movement and can quickly neutralize it.

Still, in these difficult and challenging times, there is hope. Brother Harold H. Thompson is legally challenging the censorship of Anarchist literature within the Tennessee state system and Khalilani M. Khaldun appears to be doing similar defense work of New Afrikan literature. I am certain that I will join this legal battle against the Illinois system, if and when the situation presents itself.

PARC, the October 22nd Coalition/Stolen Lives Project, ABC-Chicago, and other prison abolitionists from around the globe are rallying for our cause with benefits, conferences, meetings, art show projects, and other activities in an effort to raise awareness concerning the plight of all prisoners.

One possible missing link appears to be any type of substantial legislative lobbying for prison abolition/reform. From my perspective, there would need to be a transitional stage between reform and total abolition. In any event, we need to continue developing a peoples' movement that includes prisoners, as we are on the front lines of the battle against the *real* "evil empire!" What they are doing to us today, they may do to you tomorrow!

In the words of Walter Scott, *Quentin Durward*, 1823, "Necessity is the mother of courage, as of invention." So now is the time to rise up, settle our differences, unite, organize and move forward, in theory as well as practice.

Rising Up in the Shadow of Death

By Ernesto Aguilar

About 150 people from an array of communities met in Austin, Texas, on July 26-28 to dialogue and educate about how to challenge the prison-industrial complex. The Anarchist Black Cross conference was perhaps the first event in recent memory where organizations and individuals consensually built internal campaigns against private prisons, immigrant criminalization and the increase of women in prison. For some, the event was an affirmation of the growing prison abolition movement. In fact, the ABC conference is a sign of both progress and peril as revolutionaries chart a course toward freedom.

Listening to conference attendees and the issues they raised - from ways to beat prison administrators in their attempts to crush resistance to being more effective as prisoner advocates to the impact of prisons on communities of color - the urgency of what the Anarchist Black Cross is organized around became clear. Since Sept. 11, we've seen a drive for more prisons, more border-lockdown madness and a dumbfounding tolerance for totalitarianism. In Austin there was a spark that revolutionaries see that these trends must be fought. The desire to focus on issues and how they can be addressed in a grassroots, anti-authoritarian fashion, is promising.

The North American history of the Anarchist Black Cross is uneven. Most credit Lorenzo Kombo Ervin and his 1979 "Draft Proposal for an Anarchist Black Cross Network" with re-energizing anarchist anti-prison agitators throughout the 1990s. But the former Black Panther and political prisoner has also been outspoken about ABCs needing to be more open and that most ABC collectives are all-white, subcultural (primarily punk music lifestyle) enclaves rather than community-based organizations. At the Austin conference, Kombo reiterated these concerns, and emphasized the importance of broad organizing. Kombo's opening presentation weaved aspects of his own organizing, ideas for the ABC

Reflections on the 2002 Anarchist Black Cross Conference

and research around disproportionate rates of incarceration of people of color, and came through with determination and compassion.

What I saw as a reporter/observer, participant and presenter was a hunger for this event from those with so much to gain and so little to lose. Many of the people who spoke on incarceration, inmates and anarchy toil every day with virtually no resources and only their own passion to see justice done. They campaign against literature rejections made by administrators solely to keep prisoners misinformed; human rights abuses that would shame a dictator; and write the letters that keep prisoners company. And they do it with few dollars or people. Austin welcomed activists who defend the defenseless and the defiant. And, unlike the numerous contemporaries happy to state the obvious - that the criminal justice system is broken and must be dealt with - those who came to the conference spoke openly about the necessity to abolish the prisons, literal and figurative, that enslave us.

The ABC conference drew participants from New York, Oregon, Illinois, cities from all over Texas (where a regional ABC network already exists), New Mexico and as far off as Australia.

After an intense three-hour meeting on Sunday, attendees agreed to the creation of a network of ABC groups, creating a mission statement (releasing this as a "most people realize that crime is based on a disparity of the result of a grossly disproportionate distribution of wealth and privilege, a reflection of the present state of property relations...")

work) that explicitly spelled out a commitment to prison abolition and anti-capitalism; workgroups that took on such tasks as publishing a newsletter highlighting autonomous ABC groups' work as well as researching prison issues; and campaigns to address issues of concern, including immigrant criminalization and detention (an issue that has been of concern since the 1990s, but which rose sharply after Sept. 11); women in prison and more.

The conference hosted former prisoners, new and veteran activists and others who all expressed the need for a base of support, communications and networking. The underlying issue is that these desires were many of the same problems that plagued anarchist anti-prison activists in 1994, the year the last North American ABC conference was held. Today, communication and networking were offered up by many attendees in Austin as gaps a network could help address.

A network's benefits, such as creating a communications, accountability and work base that affirms unity but respects differences, and autonomy of affiliates, make it a natural choice for groups that traditionally work independently. However, several previous attempts have failed. In the vacuum, formations like the Anarchist Prisoners Legal Aid Network, South Chicago ABC, Break The Chains, Austin ABC and New York City ABC stepped in to do some of the most innovative revolutionary support for prisoners in the past six years. Not only have these groups been able to meld many messages, but they've managed to do work effectively. Spurred by the release and organizing efforts of former political prisoner Christopher Plummer, Austin ABC sponsored a conference to discuss creation of a new network, and the



rest is history.

Back in 1994, issues of focus were things like control units and support for political prisoners. Today, as groups like the Jericho Movement have taken a leading role in political prisoner support and defense, ABC organizers seemed to have more license to address issues like criminalization and incarceration. Workshops on political prisoners in the Pacific Northwest (Jeff "Free" Luers, Craig "Criter" Marshall and Rob Thaxton, among others) and "The Importance of Supporting Social Prisoners" gave people an opportunity to learn why it's important to support political prisoners as well as those whose lives are so often "the struggle" the left talks about. By juxtaposing "social prisoners" (those jailed for non-movement-specific activity) and "political prisoners" (those affiliated with movements and jailed for their activities), movements turn the focus onto individuals and their merits based on subjective class orientations, rather than a system that necessitates uprisings (by movement-oriented means or by those who refuse to participate in its advancement). The inclusion of both social and political prisoner support was positive, but the event lacked tactical workshops on how those two tendencies of struggle could be fused together in the context of a community group's outreach and campaigns.

Unity — particularly between those who feel every battle for the human rights of prisoners must be fought and those who feel no reform is acceptable next to prison abolition — is a constant tension. I felt a sense of isolation after a presentation where a speaker talked about the need for anarchists to work with, respect and learn agenda-free from non-anarchist communities, but the discussions among attendees were about how we "just need to get rid of prisons." Speakers and organizers talk about relating this movement to where Black, Chicano/Latino and

myself as to the disease I had contracted. I had always enjoyed reading and was fortunate enough to have had someone I knew from my neighborhood (who was a member of the Young Lords Party) working in the hole as a runner. He introduced me to Marx, Lenin, Fanon, Guevara, Malcolm X, the Black Panther Party, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Confucius, Sun Tzu, Lao Tzu, Buddha and a host of others.

From there, I immersed myself in psychology, and countless self-help books. Thus, I began my journey of breaking myself down — analyzing mind, body and soul — looking for some sign of hope. It took time, and at first it wasn't much, sort of like a small candle flickering in the wind. Ah, but there it was! Truth, the principal of spirituality! I was not who I appeared to be, for that poor, wretched creature was the product of something unnatural — conditioned to perpetuate a vicious cycle of manipulating everything opposed to truth in order to create a different truth, a false truth. It was then that I renounced everything I had contracted and had been conditioned to perpetuate.

My re-birth began with self-discipline, which equates to self-caring. From there, I began to practice what I had learned. As I became more conscious, naturally I became less reactionary. As I became more understanding, I became less antagonistic. As I began to seek higher levels of consciousness and spiritual evolution, I learned a great truth — "Life is difficult." This is the first of the "Four Noble Truths" which Buddha taught. Once we really see this truth, we transcend it. Once accepted, it no longer matters. So instead of complaining of my struggles, I began to embrace them. I saw that life is a series of problems. Now, did I want to lament about them or solve them? In dealing with my problems head-on, I grew spiritually. I began tending to my neuroses and character disorders with the new tools I had acquired. John Wesley's "Rule of Conduct" became the meaning to my life — "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as you ever can."

My evolution did not come without its setbacks, especially those from the prisonrats who learned of this "white" dude talking all this Black Panther and solidarity shit to the different organizations. Now I needed more tools to defend myself against state repression, so I entered a paralegal program and graduated at the top of my class! Before long, I became a well-known jailhouse lawyer within the Illinois state system. I am fortunate to have been involved in drafting the original writs that eventually freed two innocent men from death row and countless others from prison, period!

Meanwhile, the contemporary social, political and economic conditions (inside and outside of prison) became the catalyst which inspired me to begin developing theories to raise the political consciousness of the various "street nation" members within the Illinois system, while quelling the "illegitimate capitalistic," i.e., criminal mentality that is prevalent in them, much in the spirit of the late BPP leaders Fred Hampton and George Jackson. The gist of the theoretical mechanisms are fluid and adaptable to the various internal structures of the various organizations. I only touch upon this lightly as anything further would be outside the scope of this essay. (For a further study, see my essay entitled "Towards a Theory of Revolutionizing Street Nations.")

or security in the present for the promise or greater gratification or security in the future, since to me, my future seemed dubious indeed.

The streets of the west side of Chicago raised me, the Humboldt Park neighborhood to be exact, home of "el Reyes Latinos," and they became my psychological family. By the age of eight, I was deemed incorrigible by the Chicago public school system, and delinquent many times over by the police state apparatus. But delinquency was merely an effect. The cause was that I was diseased, for I had contracted the debilitating disease of psycho/sociopathological capitalist mentality and behavior. The particular strain that I had contracted was exceptionally hazardous as it rendered me socio-politically unconscious, perhaps even comatose, even from an early age. I showed the same symptoms of typical capitalist society - greed, a need for power, conspicuous consumption, conformity, etc. However, because of the conditions of my life up to that point, as described above, I employed means of obtaining these things that were deemed "illegitimate" by the power system.

My new psychological family provided me with some of the basic human emotional needs that I longed for - a sense of value, acceptance, camaraderie and a sense of belonging. My early horrific years with my father made me a prime candidate to carry out much of the "dirty work" for *la familia*, as all my pent up anger, rage, frustration and pain boiled inside of me and searched for release. My spiritual bankruptcy, psychological trauma, and emotional coma soon degenerated into some of the most hideous psycho/sociopathological thought and behavior one might imagine. By the age of eighteen, I had put in more "dirty work" for *la familia* than most CIA operatives accomplish in a career.

Eventually, I ended up in prison. I recall my sentencing especially, where the judge said, "I see no potential for rehabilitation in you, Mr. Flood, even at your young age. Therefore, I hereby sentence you to one hundred years in prison!" I had to be restrained as I nearly went at him, then I shouted, "One hundred years, are you fuckin' nuts? I can't do one hundred years!" The bastard gave me a devilish grin and sarcastically remarked, "Well son, then do as much of it as you can."

Within my first few days in prison, I ended up in the "hole" for assaulting a "robocop-type" guard who was hindering *la familia's* activities behind the wall. So just as quickly as I did on the streets, I made my bones inside prison too.

The "hole" on a segregation unit in the older maximum security prisons are basically "dungeons of doom." You will never, ever see a warden of any one of these joints conduct one of their choreographed "propaganda tours" through these units. For in these dungeons you will find America's most corrupt capitalistic criminality at its worst - it's psycho/socio-psychologically tormented souls at their worst - babbling incoherently, howling, screaming, crying, growling, self-mutilating, etc. This sickening crime against humanity (isolation & sensory deprivation) was held unconstitutional as "cruel and unusual punishment" some two hundred years ago by the United States Supreme Court, in a case involving the old Cherry St. Jail, in Philadelphia. Once again, history seems to repeat itself.

Conversely, it is also in these dark dungeons where you will find some of the brightest beacons of humanity and conscious light. It was in these dark dungeons that somehow I rose above the insanity - mine, as well as others - and realized that it was up to me to make a change. I was able to diagnose

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rock palefaces, everyone nods and little changes. This problem is a critical one; in a world where the anarchist and radical milieu is privileged enough that being active and organized is a "question," and infantile rants against community involvement enjoy wide circulation, time will only tell how successful the conference was in turning sympathizers into organizers, or at least finding common ground from which various tendencies could work.

The ABC movement would be more widespread today if there weren't a rebuilding process every decade because a few key ABCs folded, largely because groups' whole existence hinged on the commitment of one or two people. The life of the ABC movement hinges on working with people wherever they are at politically. The ABC movement would be better served by acknowledging collective limitations and finding a means to challenge as well as work around them.

As I gazed upon the faces of people watching ABC veteran Anthony Rayson make his plain-spoken, impassioned presentation, I wondered how many will take from the ABC conference the tools and energy to fight this genocide. Every person needs to hear what a man like Robert King Wilkerson of the Angola 3, a speaker at the conference, has to say about prisons, chattel slavery, and the need for creating a new society in which lives are valued and equal. But are people like Wilkerson reaching the folks who want these messages, because their lives - by virtue of their racial and class standing - depend on it?

The event was primarily dedicated to educational workshops, and it was clear that more time throughout the weekend should have been set up for formal organization-building talks. During the few hours on Sunday afternoon devoted to strategic discussion on a net-



POLITICAL PRISONERS? SUPPORT WORK?

work, many people seemed unfamiliar enough with "A New Draft Proposal for an Anarchist Black Cross Network," the document upon which the conference call was based, that its points could not be consensed on as a mission statement. Only a few people came with clear ideas of what they wanted to see and what tendencies they wanted to avoid. As a result, early parts of the discussion alternated between less than one-quarter of the people in attendance. Eventually, the discussion opened up, but the tiny window of time for organization discussions and the reliance on educational but not tactical or organizing workshops could have been balanced better. Some attendees expected more of a focus on actual network building.

Race continues to be the 800-pound gorilla the white left needs to understand. The ABC conference had less than 10 percent participation from people of color - roughly six to nine people, including myself and Lorenzo Kombo Ervin. There are many people of color doing wonderful criminal justice work in the United States and Canada, and they should have been actively solicited for their support and involvement.

Further, white anarchists have a long way to go on issues of race, and it's up to white folks to deal with internalized racism rather than for me, as a person of color, or other people of color to keep pointing it out. During a workshop I coordinated with Kombo on outreach to communities of color, I said that white activists wanting to build a diverse movement and reach out to communities of color need to understand that they're swimming against the current of history, in which the white left has a sorry record of manipulative relationships with Black, Chicano/Latino people and other people of color. As a consequence of history, white activists, no matter how sincere they may feel they are, may be viewed with skepticism and/or criticized (sometimes in a backward way) by others, so thick skin is a must. Unsaid at that point was that

people of color are socialized to have thick skin virtually from birth as a coping mechanism for living in an inherently racist society and, while undesirable, is a reality. A white woman soon spoke up to say she resented having to have thick skin and that she basically wanted to know how long history was going to be an issue. Ob-serving the faces of some in attendance, I felt that she spoke what several white folks were uncomfortable to say out loud, but with which they agreed. Komboa said the issue was not how long white activists had to endure history, but the challenges the freedom movement faces.

Despite this, the ABC conference took an engaging step by forming a people of color workgroup, comprised of both people of color and white supporters, to help shape ideas for ABCs on questions of disproportionate incarceration, outreach to communities of color and other key issues. I left with questions - whether a national workgroup on such issues absolved local ABC groups of exposing racism and prisons on their own and the effectiveness of asking white folks to help shape policy on issues of people of color. But I was impressed by the broad support for such a workgroup enough to be patient and see what happens. This is the first time I am aware that such a wide range of anarchists came together and said the issue of race and imprisonment was something we all needed to deal with, and this should be viewed as a major victory for all people. Since the conference, a statement by Lorenzo Komboa Ervin concerning the newly formed Anarchist Black Cross Network, raised many constructive comments about this evolution and framed several issues related to race and organizing.

Gender dynamics are also a major problem in the anarchist movement, and the ABC conference was no exception. Most of the presenters were men, and men dominated many discussions and question and answer sessions. Some women in attendance privately criticized dominating behavior exhibited by a few men. This issue is not new. Concerns about gender issues of late have come to the fore in the anarchist anti-prison movement with allegations against a well-known anarchist prisoner going public and complaints of sexism being leveled last year against a particular ABC formation. Male dominance is a ques-

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tion the ABC movement and other anarchists must deal with up front.

If we are to be successful in creating change, men need to look hard at themselves and their actions; accept responsibility for their behavior, and be open and confident enough in themselves and their comrades to refrain from speaking first and, as warranted, take themselves out of spaces when they begin to dominate meetings; to recognize their own self-righteous tendencies, and so on. As with race, the initiative for this is on those who've been socialized to buy into their dominance - in this case, those with male privilege. As with race, patriarchy isn't a guilt thing or a defensive thing but a history thing, and we need to be honest with ourselves when we acknowledge that. People point out sexism in hopes of remedying the situation, and we need to take concerns seriously. This issue is critical in any movement for change.

Despite faults in some segments of organizing, the fact that this event - a national conference of anarchist prison abolitionists - and the resulting network came together is alone significant. In the United States, the prison-industrial complex has grown (and education funding has bled) exponentially, police are being built as a neighborhood military, and the plethora of issues makes criminal justice the most sinister specter facing communities today. For anarchists, who traditionally agree with each other on very little, to look beyond their individual or collective work, to see the value in a network and to make that a reality in the United States is unusual. ABCs across Europe are already networked and working together, so stepping that direction in the U.S. seems like a natural progression. The ABC movement faces hurdles, but, as one conference participant put it, "this network has to happen." The conditions people live under are getting harsher, the police are becoming more brutal, and the sentences are getting longer. The outcome is uncertain, but the future may be even more uncertain without organized resistance.

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Write to me for anything. I do a zine called *WEINER SOCIETY* (free to prisoners, WxS, 109 Arnold Ave., Cranston, R.I. 02905...) 39
Resources for bi/gay/lesbian/trans prisoners are available free from *OUT/WORLD*, c/o S. Berry, P.O. Box 20900 / Tompkins Square Station, New York, NY 10009, & another great resource is the long running queerzine *FANORAMA* put out by my boyfriend, Richard E. Bump (same addy as *WEINER SOCIETY*)

I want to thank Anthony Rayson, Sean Lambert, *OUT/WORLD*, Richard, Spooky & Anarchy.

Neil Edgar - K61832
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* Since this was written, Neil has tested positive for HIV. He continues to produce his explosive zine and live his vibrant life, as best he can.

The Re-Birth of Humanity in a Pathological Capitalistic Society

Richard M. Flood

My entire life has been in struggle - one long, continuous battle; many times for sheer survival; for a long time against myself, and finally, in joining others in striving towards a better world for all people.

For most of my youth, even the most basic human material needs of sustenance, i.e. food, clothing, shelter, etc., often appeared as privilege or luxury. I was always told "We can't afford that," in comparison to families of privilege, whose children are taught early on to elevate their level of thought to "How can we afford that."

My father was a drunken Irish ironworker, who earned enough money to provide those basic material needs that we were lacking. He just never brought any money home. What he did bring home was anger, rage, rape, violence, torture and mayhem. I was six years of age when my mother was able to free herself from the psychological stranglehold of my father and leave him - but it seemed that she didn't have much use for me either, as her own lifestyle kept her away most of the time, until one day when she just didn't come back. I would see her from time to time, coming out of or going into some neighborhood tavern, always with a different man. Sometimes when she was drunk, she would call me and try to hug me and tell me how much she loved me, but by that time I was already indifferent to empty word play, although deep down I wished it was true.

The combination of my father's abuse and my mother's neglect and eventual abandonment, left me spiritually bankrupt, psychologically traumatized and emotionally dead. Abandonment to a child is the equivalent of death - for when a child is abandoned, either psychologically or in actuality, they perceive the world as dangerous and frightening, even deadly. From my perspective, I could never imagine forsaking gratification

access to condoms, let alone some knowledge of safe sex education.

There are 35 prisons in California, the most per state nationwide. There is a lot of sexual activity, both open & undercover in this prison complex. People have been trying to retain passion & love while the cold system seeks to bleed them to nothing. And *no one* is having safe sex!

When I began to really *think about* all this I decided to become celibate for 6 months, then get tested for HIV. If I am positive next month when I am examined, I will be segregated & isolated in an AIDS unit, where I can die slowly with all the other hopelessly walking corpses there. If I am negative, I will never have casual sex again & I'll wait for a boy who will go through this very process for me as well as himself.

But, I should have access to methods of infection prevention. It is cruel & unusual to deny me such. Blatant bigotry.

Some people are out there putting effort & action into condom distribution in prisons, nationwide. My boyfriend is part of an activist group doing this now in Rhode Island. And there has to be more of this type of activism. Every single prisoner deserves this. And you know why? Because the AIDS rate for male prisoners is *six times* the national rate & womyn prisoners have rates *23 times* higher than national rates among womyn. That's the facts.

Realize we are dying in horrendous amounts by viral disease spread that *could* be lessened and drastically reduced by prevention if only the institutional conglomerate gave a fuck & recognized the need to make protection available to the incarcerated. Once again, we are treated like a lesser form of human life.

Be aware. I wish I could do more. I can write & hope that enough concentrated activism will effect policies. It's a no-brainer, if only the institution would think in \$\$ on this one, how much medical care & life support could be alleviated from the budget if prevention helped to curb infection? But that would just make too much sense.

Plus hey... it's only queers dyin' off, ya know?



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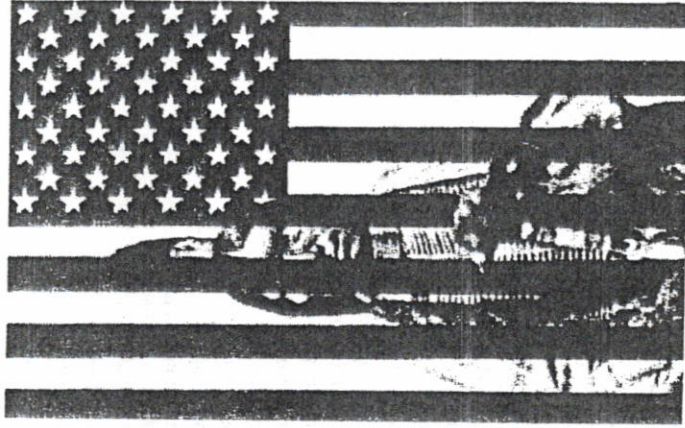
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November 21, 2002: A new statement from American Indian political prisoner David "Looks Away" Scalera of the Children of the River

Brothers & Sisters in the Resistance,

I am Looks Away, one of the Children of the River. I'm writing this as an update to those of you who have given us much support over the last two years and to those who are unfamiliar with our story and would like to become part of the support network. On February 28, 2001, eight inmates took over and destroyed a housing unit at Oregon's newest "super prison" - Two Rivers Correctional Institution (TRCI). The Children of the River are three of those eight. Ours was a direct act of protest after eight months of trying to open a dialogue with administration addressing our grievances. Those included the neglect of our religious ceremonies, disrespect for our religious articles, mistreatment by ultra-authoritarian guards, disrespect of our visitors and violation of the mail process. For our part in the riot on unit nine we have been in maximum custody lockdown since February 28, 2001, and we each received additional time to our original sentences.



Within the last month two of the three have been transferred. We have spent the last year and a half in the Oregon State Prison (OSP) Intensive Management Unit. Tewahnee Sahme (Warm Springs Indian) and myself (Arapaho) are now being housed in Closed Supervision Unit (CSU), at the TRCI, where all of the story begins. Things have been tense to say the least. Directly after the riot we were threatened by numerous guards who were very angry at having their authority stripped from them and their control jeopardized. We were told that when we came back our lives would be a living hell and we would get ours. Well now we are back. The situation is very dim here at CSU. Once again we face religious persecution in the form of denial of *any* religious activity including speaking with the elder who comes in. We have been told not to sing our traditional songs when we have our three hours outside. We face many forms of oppression that we will continue to resist. Your support will not be wasted. Tee and I are working to have headbands approved to be worn and the use of the sacred pipe and a hand drum. We will continue these fights even in the belly of the beast. What we are asking of those of you who stand with us is a phone call campaign to the head of the Oregon Department of Corrections (ODOC) letting him know that we don't stand alone. It will be much harder for the guards here to play games with us if they receive pressure from the outside.

I ask you to let it be known that you're watching what happens to the Children of the River and that any "setting us up" or bum beefs, will not be accepted. Your voices are important and the weapon we have against the capitalist, imperialist system is Unity. They truly fear those who stand together with one purpose. There is nothing that we cannot accomplish together and much has been done already. A traditional lodge has been built here at Two Rivers after the riot. CSU is not permitted to use it but I believe that with your support, we in here, can continue to be a thorn in the side of this oppressive system and make it an easier road for those who follow us down this road. In honor of all of you out there who stand in strong resistance in this struggle against oppression I walk with my head high.

In strength,

Looks Away (David Scalera)

For more info contact the Break The Chains collective at PO Box 11331, Eugene, OR 97440/
breakthechains02@yahoo.com/www.breakthechains.net or me directly at: David Scalera,
#13405480, 82911 Beach Access Rd., Umatilla, OR 97882.

To Whom It May Concern:

I am an enrolled member of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and am currently housed in the IMU Unit at Oregon State Prison (OSP). I am writing this letter to better explain the enclosed proposal. This is an attempt to work in a humble way with the Administration of the Oregon Department of Corrections to represent and recognize a very important object in our religious needs within the Oregon Prison System.

The wearing of a headband in the day-to-day lives of Native American people is a very important part of our spirituality as explained in the enclosed proposal. It's religious meaning has been recognized by the Federal Courts Bureau of Prisons and most of the surrounding states, as well as many other sources as explained in said proposal. I have read the Religious Policy for the ODOC and realize that it does not mention the wearing of headbands by Natives as a religious expression/article.

Personally, I wore the headband in ceremony and on a daily basis before I was placed in the custody of ODOC and I am reaching out for the right to express myself in a way my people acknowledge as sacred and be recognized by the policy of this system as a religious item.

If, for any reason this proposal is denied, I would appreciate a detailed explanation as to why. I thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Tewahnee Sahme

Proposal:

That the Oregon Department of Corrections include the wearing of the headband for Native American prisoners as part of the religious policy.

This right regards the wearing of the headband in all of the sacred colors: in all of the Oregon Department of Corrections Institutions' main lines; DSU's, SMU's, and Death Row.

The wearing of the headband for Native Americans falls directly under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments of the United States Constitution.

few years of my incarceration. In this CA prison system it is literally **ILLEGAL**, as stated in protocol manuals & enforced by disciplinary methods, for two inmates to engage in sexual relations. Which I believe is violently wrong. I'm not an idiot. I understand anti-rape & forced copulation laws & consequences, but making it illegal for prisoners to have the *right* to have consensual sex is blatant homophobic oppression of bi & gay prisoners. I have the right as a human to fall in love with a man & express my love through my body with his. No authority or power has the right to forbid me of this *or* to call it wrong. No system has the right to suppress such a thing as love or *true pure primal desire*. This is vacating emotion, the flame of life & everything that is being human, from the prisoner. What the plan is exactly... manufacture emotionless zombie programmed reactionary entities.

And a homophobic authority of course, breeds a homophobic population. It's not easy being an out bi or homosexual in a prison environment. Homophobia is not only rampant, it's trendy. Remember the name of the game is to be THE baddest, toughest Motherfucker around, & if you are sucking dick, well you're a sissy. Especially me, my boyfriend comes to visit me & we hold hands in the visiting room & kiss passionately to the gasps of nearby mothers, who think we will pollute their children's minds with homo cooties, & the disdainful staves of predator cops, just waiting for us to slip-up & get "over affectionate" so they can terminate our visit. On the yard, FAGGOT is a common way to refer to me... I'm a bit like a local, walking plague.

And it's this type of mentality that is hindering the battle against the AIDS crisis in Amerikkkan prisons. The *idea* that being homosexual is being abnormal, disturbed, less than hetero, or in this case... **CRIMINAL**.

AIDS shouldn't be a crisis anymore. There are drugs to combat HIV, & there's safe sex. Everyone knows to wear a condom, but departmental "prevention" is simply to forbid or act like it doesn't exist.

Condoms are only available to prisoners in Vermont (gotta love that state compared to most...) & Mississippi prisons & jails like NYC, SF, LA & DC. In LA County Jail, you must be in the designated "Homo Ward" to have access, but *that* hardly becomes effective. Basically, 65% of all inmates participate in some form of homosexual activity, with 14% consisting of *rape*. A very minute percentage of these even have

So, another fuckin' column from another prisoner who has been politicized from incarceration & was a terror out in "civilized society." That what you are expecting? This guy once wrote me & said that 85% of the "anarcho" movement is made up of prisoners like me, rebellious, uncouth social rejects that stumble across circle A in an institution & get "saved" by the best reason ever to be an anti-authoritarian... I guess this is a little joke out there in some circles. Hilarious, huh?

And yeah, I'm political, if there's a requirement, though my brand of anarchism is deeply personal in nature and tends to feel almost spiritual inside me, like an epic opera of self-liberation singing out of me through every pore, hair follicle or airway, booming like death metal, double bass drum lines, matched by a sitar orchestra, all to the tune of INDEPENDENCE EACH AND EVERY MOMENT! I feel bonded to animals, earth, family & the great connection we all share as humans, co-existing (or striving to...) on this planet being murdered and annihilated by men like Dubya, trying to clasp hands in these dark & dire hours as rifts are torn between nations & peoples, & bio-warfare seems imminent & inevitable & we all witness neo-fascism unfolding all around us blatantly shrouded in stars & stripes.

Anarchy for me is doing whatever is right for me in this moment now. I'm in a cell. I do my laundry in a metal toilet which I also shit in. I basically live on Ramen noodles because the prison doesn't accomodate for a vegetarian diet. I'm a protective custody inmate. I educate myself through books from prison resource groups. I write acoustic punk rock songs. And I write about what I feel and love...

However, I don't want to talk about why I'm an anarchist or why you should be too... Rob Los Ricos, the boys of Chain Reaction, Karyn Horning & Anthony Rayson all do this honorably better than I. I'm more of a chatty persona type than the call to arms orator of vigilance.

But I do have an issue that slices my heart & that I've noticed hasn't actually been addressed much in the anarcho community, but is starting to stir up awareness in certain dark corners of the media & independence press. AIDS in prison. Death toll. Prisoners being left to die by indifference. Just another facet to the ugly face of prison incompetence & departmental pre-meditated murder.

I'm an out bi-sexual, who has been very active sexually in the last

Theology:

Native American cultures are highly regarded by our people as gifts from our Creator, natural organic and dynamic. Identity and dignity are rooted in establishments with spiritual traditions and principles. Spiritual life and cultural life have no ultimate distinctions between them, for any and all Native Americans who adhere themselves to this way of life...all walk the same Red Road. Spirituality is the whole of any person and the way of life he or she chooses to practice. Spiritual leaders, volunteers, and Elders will assure the authenticity of religious observance. There is no written doctrine, as all teachings are passed down through generations by word of mouth. It is for the current generation to commemorate these beliefs and sacraments gifted by the Creator of all life. A direct relationship with the Creator is sought during individual as well as group rituals. Native Americans experience and express spirituality through symbols. Symbolic identities and directions are regarded as fundamental realities among many Native American Nations.

The Sacred Circle:

The Circle is highly regarded as a sacred symbol to all Native American Nations. The Circle represents the hoop of life and a connection with Earth Mother demonstrating the unity of all Nations, and all natural life. The four directions also has significance in the Circle of Life. What is often symbolized through Native art and clothing is the Medicine Wheel with colors and their meanings. East (yellow) is the location of the Spirit of Enlightenment, guidance and direction. South (black) is the place of the Spirit of Growth, particularly after winter. West (red) is the doorway one goes through when leaving this world and returning to the Spirit World. North (white) is the location of the Spirit of Healing and Reconciliation. These spirit helpers are always present and within the sacred circle. Though each Nation may hold these colors in different directions, the colors represented are very symbolic and hold great significance in Native culture.

The Headband:

The headband for the Native American has a significant role in all traditions. The headband completes and symbolizes the Circle of the wearer. It is believed to maintain oneness with order, conveying clear and respectful thinking. The headband may be worn everyday to invoke the Spirits for a good blessing. It can be blessed by a Medicine Man or Spiritual Advisor with appropriate prayers. Headband colors normally have universal meanings symbolizing the following: Blue- sky or delity, Red -power or strength, Green -Mother Earth, White -purity, Yellow -corn pollen Road, and Black -darkness or infinity.

Goals:

With consideration to the above stated facts, I wish to bring awareness to the importance and significance of the headband as a sacred symbol among Native people. It should be understood that the wearing of a headband is a respected part of our everyday way of prayer and spirituality. I would like to see that respect and sincerity be shown among Native prisoners. By including the headband in the Religious policy and educating officers to the importance of this, ODOC will allow Native prisoners the opportunity to carry themselves in a spiritual manner on a daily basis, as well to continue to practice the ways of our Ancestors, while inside of these facilities and better ourselves in a humble manner.

Dear friends:

We just learned today that American Indian prisoners Tewahnee Sahme ("Tee") and David Scalera ("Looks Away") - the "Children of the River", who are active in the struggle for Native rights behind prison walls, were just recently transferred from Oregon State Prison (OSP) in Salem, Oregon, to Twin Rivers Correctional Institution (TRCI) in Umatilla, Oregon. Tee and Looks Away were part of a prison riot (aimed at winning better conditions for prisoners) at TRCI nearly two years ago, and they are very scared to be back there because the prison guards have a vendetta against them (for taking part in the riot, and taking other measures to fight for prisoner's rights) not to mention the fact that they're notoriously racist pigs. Tee and Looks Away now need your support more than ever. We'll have more info about this situation soon. But, in the meantime, please send messages of solidarity to:

Tewahnee Sahme #11186353, TRCI, 82911 Beach Access Rd., Umatilla, OR 97882 and

David T. Scalera #13405480, TRCI, 82911 Beach Access Rd., Umatilla, OR 97882

For background info, contact me or see the Break The Chains website, www.breakthechains.net

"Ask not what your country can do for you,
but what you can do for your country" - John Kennedy

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And speaking of "doing things," I am one to keep activists close. I'd like to briefly review exactly what the power of solidarity has done in recent months, at least in my little world, in my limited view.

When DOC announced it was intending to sell more prison building bonds in October 2002, Western Prison Projects sent out an alert! I'm told that the letters literally poured into the offices of the powers that be. Phones rang off the hook. DOC postponed selling their bonds at least until January 2003, maybe march 2003!

And we were heard clearly.

Women at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility were quite literally dropping dead and the medical staff was indifferent. Word got out, and once again, letters and phone calls flooded DOC with questions they preferred not to answer. Under protest, medical relief was obtained.

And we were heard, finally.

For unknown reasons, Dave Cook, the Superintendent of DOC went on "vacation," resigning from his post as head of DOC, under the Governor, of course. The Mail Administrator resigned. The Superintendent of Shutter Creek was removed from SUMMIT and reassigned an assistant's job at EOCL. He had no choice in the matter, according to the local paper. The Superintendent of Snake River Prison was reassigned to an assistant position of General Services. Objections duly noted!

An outside research group has announced that the Measure 11 law has had inconclusive effects on Oregon's crime rate.

Measure 11 has been cited as a primary cause for prison population growth and a major factor in Oregon's budget crisis.

Prisoners with Hepatitis C are now getting medical care for their illness, and a woman at this facility is now actually in remission!

And we were heard.

Portland police pepper sprayed children in a peaceful protest turned melee. The outrage has reached the other end of the United States. Investigations are under way.

Those people are being heard.

adequate warm winter clothing to protect against freezing, rain and other inclement weather. They are only issued thin lowtop cloth shoes, thin cloth shirt and pants and thin cloth jackets - no insulated underclothing. No hats and no gloves are permitted. Guards threaten to rip out their dreadlocks. Maxwell has had his mattress taken for days at a time for no reason other than spite and without incurring any misconduct reports, and many other abuses.

The majority of white line level supermax staff admit to having never personally seen or known a Black person prior to working at these newly constructed prisons. It thus requires no great stretch of the imagination to conceive of the views and attitudes such a group of whites (who've had little to no exposure to Blacks since the post Civil War reconstruction era and the nominal abolition of racial segregation,) entertain about the over 70% Black supermax prisoner population in their charge.

Virginia was the confederate capital of the South!

Kevin Johnson #185492
Wallens Ridge State Prison
P.O. Box 759
Big Stone Gap, VA 24219

THE OUTMATE GUIDE

This booklet is a sort of "Outmate 101". It lists some of the supports available to prisoners' families & friends. The booklet is 23 pages & has sections on:

- Helpful web sites
- Problem solving
- Keeping relationships alive
- Support groups and other odds and ends.

I'll keep adding to it as I hear new things of interest to OUTMATES.

You can send any suggestions for things that should be in this guide, or order a copy at the address below.

Please include \$1.50 for each guide.

Anne Rose-Pierce,
3225 Alder Court, #1,
Portland, Oregon



the VDOC refused to allow Connecticut prison officials to enter Wallens Ridge to observe the conditions under which their prisoners were housed. In fact, the VDOC became so frustrated with the media and group coverage through which its supermax conditions were being exposed in Connecticut, that VDOC spokesperson Larry Traylor contended that the Connecticut DOC needed to learn how to "control" its media.

Also, the first group of New Mexico prisoners brought to Wallens Ridge, were promptly returned to NM, upon a flurry of reports of their having been systematically beaten by Wallens Ridge guards during their intakes, in response to their alleged involvement in a NM prison riot.

Many of the compacted prisoners have been kept isolated from Virginia prisoners. However, I have been housed among many of them, and for the past several months have been housed in the same segregation unit with four Virgin Islands prisoners whom Wallens Ridge refuses to release to its general population, although each was housed in general population in lower security prisons prior to being compacted to Wallens Ridge. None of them meets Virginia supermax criteria. These four prisoners are Reuben Maduro, Bradley Maxwell, Eric Miller and Meral Smith. Maduro is kept in segregation - confined 23 1/2 hours a day to a small cell with no recreational activities - for no reason other than that he constantly writes letters to those on the outside about the abuses within Virginia's supermaxes. The remaining VI prisoners are kept in segregation because of their observing West Indian cultural and religious tradition, namely having dreadlocks.

These supermax white guards have demonstrated zero tolerance for these segregated VI prisoners and their "alien" culture and dialect. I observe constant abuse and antagonism of these prisoners, whom, I might say, have exhibited a remarkable level of restraint in their responses to these harassments, which include: their being called "Monkey," "Savage" and more explicitly racist epithets; refused opportunities to purchase commissary foods as other prisoners can, while receiving meals which do not meet basic nutritional standards. Guards refuse their purchases of stamps and stationary (especially in Maduro's case.) They are degradingly made to kneel on bare concrete and endure visual body cavity searches each time they leave their assigned cells. They are made to shower under observation of female guards and video cameras, denied

Youths have died in prison bootcamp programs. The abuse of those young people has received much attention, and deservedly so. People across the United States made it clear to Texas and to Arizona, Florida, Maryland and Nevada to name a few, that the abuse of America's youth has to stop!

The voices have been heard.

Audits of several prison industrial complexes and their practices have revealed mismanagement, corruption and abuse of authority and steps are being taken to hold those in charge accountable.

Again, we were heard.

Sympathy to those inmates that were raped, beaten, abused in any manner and to those who did not survive their ordeals was not enough - action was taken on behalf of the helpless. The details were shocking, the results promising as accountability, confirmed by public awareness, was obtained.

And we were being heard.

DNA testing applications has freed any number of deathrow inmates, vacating life sentences and bringing the death penalty statutes under relentless fire. Officials are scrutinizing the mentally ill and our judiciary and corrections systems, challenging the justice of current treatment of our mentally ill population.

We are being heard!

Censoring inmate mail and other communications is under fire, allowing more information to be obtained about the inner workings of the various corrections departments, putting the corruption and abuse out there for all to see, and I have no doubt, changes will follow.

Again, we are heard.

These are to name but a few battles that have been raging across our land. Struggles within our cities, states and within ourselves. It literally takes blood, sweat and determination to make changes where change is unwelcome. We all know that the road to change begins with information and in results. But few really know the price that is paid within the shadows in between. It is my hope that as we pass, more will join us, making the journey lighter, the work quicker and the voice stronger. Well, what do you hear? And what are you gonna do about it?

In Struggle, Annette Lambert #5889770
P.O. Box 9000 Wilsonville, Oregon 97070

Letter from Margaret Majos

My name is Margaret Majos. I am currently incarcerated for the last 12 years of my life. Being in this dark place opened up my spiritual and political mind more than ever. Society needs a "wake up" call to the truth (reality, some would call it.) Well, here it is. I am a voice from inside-out for Anthony Rayson's group, to will to make a positive change in our lives. Yes!

We are in prison - a cage that must be opened sooner or later. But, where does the path lead us, *after* the door opens? There are so many issues that need to be looked over and discussed.

First of all, it is totally insane to keep 20 females in one dorm when some of them have 10 or more years to do *still* INSANE! If you are not strong, this will be your "brainwashing story." Who thought about it? "Criminal" as they call us, we are not animals! Yet! Even an animal is not stuck with 20 others in one cage, without hope! If they were, they would die! Well! Our spirits die, too, if not nourished.

There is a huge need for some new programs for "long-timers." Their conduct and rehabilitation should be taken into consideration. Their serving time should be cut shorter!!!

Medical treatment is poor. My own experience speaks for itself. I suffer chronic and permanent back injury (pains,) stomach problems, which is treated with a medication that induces the problem! The authorities desire to take away any and all positive activities!

Please wake the dead spot in your heart up! Let us live, but teach us how! Only love, peace and compassion can do that.

Margaret Majos #B-49682
P.O. Box 549
Lincoln, IL 62656



prisoners out of a total prison population of 28,000 (see VDOC Offender Statistic Survey FY1997.) The public fell in line behind the supermax hype without question, despite *falling* crime rates, because of the "war on crime" and the "war on drugs" political climate, in which parole in Virginia was abolished and sentences lengthened.

This agenda was sure to allow the prison industry and profits in Virginia to continue expanding. It should be noted that wars are waged against groups of people and not against abstract ideas or inanimate objects. This explains why Virginia has only a 20% black citizenry but a 70% black prison population. This is a state which incarcerates blacks at a higher rate over whites than old South Africa during openly racist apartheid.

However, the VDOC was forced to change its tune. An unprecedented level of racist and sadistically fueled brutalities inflicted upon the vastly black supermax prison populations by an almost exclusively white staff, was immediately followed by the opening of the Red Onion. Scathing reports were being issued by attorneys with Human Rights Watch, exposing these conditions. The fact was also exposed that the vast majority of Virginia's supermax prisoners did not qualify for supermax conditions and many were due to be released back to society - without rehabilitation - in only a few months or years.

With its grand deception exposed, the VDOC had to find a way to keep its supermax beds full, avert media attention and still earn the projected profits which these prisons were designed to bring in. Thus began an unprecedented process of contracting to fill Virginia's supermax beds with prisoners from other prison systems, including from the District of Columbia, Wyoming, Connecticut, New Mexico, Hawaii and the Territorial Virgin Islands.

However, every group of these prisoners, compacted to Virginia supermaxes reported the same racist and abusive conditions at these prisons. The Connecticut Department of Corrections took the lead in responding to such abuses by terminating its compact with the VDOC following continued complaints and reports of brutality and racism, from its prisoners and their advocates.

Also, several suspicious deaths of its prisoners occurred under VDOC custody. One such death occurred immediately following an attack by guards with electric weapons on a fully restrained black prisoner. Indeed,

During July 2001, the Virgin Islands (VI) began shipping several of its prisoners to Virginia's state supermax prisons under Virginia's "Interstate Compact" Laws. This, despite the VI's being a U.S. territory and not a state. As a native Virginian and supermax prisoner since the use of these prisons began in 1998, I believe that I am qualified to give an insider's view of Virginia's supermax agenda.

In the mid 80's and late 90's, prisons were ranked among the top three industries in Virginia, and Virginia is a state that has four of the world's top industries; companies like Philip Morris, Dupont, Reynolds Metal, the U.S. Defense Supply Company and A.H. Robins, one of the largest pharmaceutical/medical supply companies in the world. Prisons and "crime" are exploited to generate capital and boost the economy; with prisoners as living, breathing commodities, or live stock (private investors buying and selling shares in this industry's stock day in and day out.)

As a contribution to this then-booming industry, in 1998 and 1999, the Virginia Department of Corrections began operating its first two and only 1,200 bed supermaximum security prisons - Wallens Ridge and Red Onion State Prisons. Both of these prisons are located within Wise County, Virginia - an almost completely white-populated, economically depressed, rural and remote mountainous southwestern region of the state. To justify the expenses of construction and operating these prisons, the VDOC Director, Ronald J. Angelone fed the public all sorts of distortions through the media. He even admitted that these prisons were not designed nor operated to in any way rehabilitate their detainees. Angelone characterized those to be housed in these prisons as "the worst of the worst" - prisoners so dangerous and predatory that they could be controlled nowhere else, and they would never go home. Yet, no evidence was ever provided to substantiate the existence of 2,400 chronically dangerous prisoners in Virginia.

Indeed, Virginia doesn't have and never has had enough prisoners who have allegedly displayed dangerous conduct to fill even one, let alone two, supermax prisons! Virginia has never had a particularly violent prison population. In 1997 for example, the VDOC had only 72 alleged assaults on staff and 86 allegedly on

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THE REVOLUTION MOVE SPEAK OF AINT NO MYTH OR CONVERSATION PIECE, THERE IS A WAVE WELLING UP THAT'S BEEN WELLING UP FOR YEARS THAT IS SOON TO BE RELEASED AND WILL SUPPORT ONLY THOSE WHO CAN SWIM WHEN THE TIDE SEEMS LOW IT AINT SAFE TO FALL ASLEEP AND ASSUME THE TIDE AINT COMING IN, THE SMART THING TO DO IS MAINTAIN AWARENESS BY KEEPING YOUR MIND ON THE PROBLEM CAUSING SYSTEM SO WHEN THE REVOLUTIONARY WAVE DEALS THE FINAL BLOW YOU ARE CARRIED SMOOTHLY AS A FIGHTER, RESISTER AND NOT DROWNED AS THE UNWARE. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MOVE IS TO MAKE PEOPLE AWARE OF JOHN AFRICA'S REVOLUTION, FOR THIS PROBLEM SYSTEM MUST BE WASHED CLEAN SWIFTLY, UNCOMPROMISINGLY IN ORDER FOR TRUE FREEDOM TO BE FELT. IN THE WORDS OF JOHN AFRICA - WHILE THE SO-CALLED EDUCATORS TALK OF LOVE MOUTH THE NECESSITY FOR PEACE, ASSERT THE POWER OF LOVE, COMPREHEND THE URGENCY OF FREEDOM, THE REFORM WORLD SYSTEM CANNOT TEACH LOVE WHILE MAKING ALLOWANCES FOR WAR, FREEDOM WHILE MAKING ALLOWANCES FOR THE INCONSISTENT SHACKLES OF ENSLAVEMENT FOR TO MAKE ALLOWANCES FOR SICKNESS IS TO BE UNHEALTHY, TO MAKE CONCESSIONS WITH SLAVERY IS TO BE ENSLAVED, TO COMPROMISE WITH THE PERSON OF COMPROMISE IS TO BE AS THE PERSON YOU ARE COMPROMISING WITH... LONG LIVE JOHN AFRICA'S WISDOM

THE POWER OF TRUTH IS FINAL

LONG LIVE JOHN AFRICA

FREE THE MOVE 9

FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS

ON THE MOVE JANET AFRICA
DEB AFRICA
JANTINE AFRICA

Mumia Abu-Jamal AM8335, SCI Greene,
1040 East R. Furman Highway, Waynesburg,
PA 15370-8090. Former BPP. In 1981 he was
framed for the murder of a cop. He was recently
taken off death row and was re-sentenced to
Life in prison.

Janine Phillips Africa #006309
Janet Holloway Africa #006308
Debbi Simms Africa #006307
451 Fullerton Avenue
Cambridge Springs, Pennsylvania 16403-1238

As with race, patriarchy isn't a guilt thing or a defensive thing but a history thing, and we need to be honest with ourselves when we acknowledge that



Jerome White-Bey #37479
 Jefferson City Corr. Center
 Box 900, Jefferson City, MO 65102
 Missouri Prison Labor Union

"Don't be surprised when I say I was in prison. We've all been in prison. That's what America means--prison."
 --Malcolm X

Bruce Cummings # 36911
 Crossroads Corr. Center
 1115 East Pence Road (2B-122)
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